# PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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# Public Policy Development and Implementation in the United Arab Emirates

A study of organizational learning during policy development and implementation in the Abu Dhabi Police and the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Interior

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**Abstract**

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Key Words: public policy, organizational learning, policy development, policy implementation, policy interdependences, policy governance, policy management, policy practices, policy groups, United Arab Emirates.

**Abstract:** This reflective analysis of the Emirati public policy process (PPP) cycle and implications of uneven application of new public management (NPM) paradigms in the UAE offers insight into the way that public administrations develop, learn, evolve, and cope with new challenges during the policy development process. The author also assesses the relationship between organizational learning and organizational practices, to generate practical knowledge and experience that is translated into recommendations that will benefit UAE government organizations, and indeed any public sector organization in the Gulf Region.

Inside action research was chosen to emphasize the author's dual role as both a researcher and a participant. As an advisor to both the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) of the UAE and the Abu Dhabi Police (ADP), the author helped both organisations improve their PPP experiences while researching the challenges, learning, and adaptations which occurred while policy was being developed within the MOI. The author generated data through reflective memos, informal interviews, and document analysis, and presents her findings in terms of both academic findings and practice-oriented recommendations.

The author primarily found that new models were necessary to reflect the highly flexible and authority-oriented UAE PPP cycle. The author also explored how cultural understandings led to challenges with NPM and learning in the UAE public administration, hindering policy development. Finally, the author found that her own position, as a female expatriate in the Emirati government, allowed for some valuable reflection about experience of serving in a Global South public administration.

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## Glossary

**ADP** - Abu Dhabi Police

**EFQM** - The EFQM excellence model is a non-prescriptive business excellence framework for organizational management, promoted by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)

**EXPO 2020** - Universal Exposition to be hosted by Dubai (UAE), opening on October 20, 2020.

**HH** - His Highness Sheikh Saif Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, Deputy of Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Commander of Abu Dhabi Police at the time of research.

**IAR** - Inside action research

**MOI** - Ministry of the Interior of the UAE

**NPM** - New public management

**OL** - Organisational learning

**PAR** - Participatory action research

**PDF** - policy development file, including feedback of stakeholders, plan for implementation, and requirements for change

**PEC** - Policy Evaluation Committee

**PPP** - Public policy process

**RACI** - Management tool with initials as follows ‘R’ for ‘responsible’, A for ‘accountable’, C for ‘consulting’, I for ‘informing’

**SA** - MOI/ADP Strategic advisors (internal)

**SME** - Subject matter expert (external consultant)

**SOP** - Standard operating procedure

**T1** - template for studying the need for the policy

**T2** - template for designing and proposing policy

**UAE** - United Arab Emirates

## Chapter 1: Introduction

With so much public attention paid to how governments provide services for their people, it is not surprising that many governments are deeply concerned with developing their public administration and improving their policy processes. Public policy is intended to improve public services, solve critical problems, enhance social stability, and improve quality of life for citizens. Efficient and innovative public policy enables the programmes of governments and politicians to succeed; therefore, most public organisations invest heavily in improving the public policy process (PPP) to speedily meet unexpected future demands from the public. Understanding how PPP is used to ensure quality policy is developed is extremely important to governments, necessitating academic research that is practical and evidence-based. In rapidly modernising countries like the United Arab Emirates (UAE), this PPP is ongoing and readily available for study, offering new opportunities for research.

The public has a tendency to ask how policy could be better, why citizens are not more involved, or why certain actions are taken at specific times. These and other questions are frequently asked by the public with no understanding of the challenges facing policy makers: people suggest alternative solutions that could never be proposed, since they are typically unaware of the complex nature of public policy formulation. For example, many people build their attitudes to public policy without considering the inevitable disputes between the interests of the groups involved, or without acknowledging politics and the nature of power

framing policy, or even recognising a direct and necessary influence on policy development (Hill 2013). Empirical, insider action research from within the policy-making apparatus of a country can shine a light on those inevitable disputes, making research into the dynamics of how policy is developed extremely valuable, especially when exploring under-studied, Global South case examples.

Furthermore, organisational learning (OL) reveals the challenging relationship between the policy and the evidence and practices which are equally influenced by the political/organisational context (Howlett et al. 2009). Understanding how policy is developed within certain contexts, and how OL allows for those policy cycles to occur, is a necessary part of improving PPP and moving closer to the goal of having policy results match plans and expectations.

### 1.1 The Study of Policy-Making

This thesis examines the practicalities and realities of the public policy process in the UAE context, and place this case example within the larger academic framework of PPP and New Public Management (NPM) studies. Specifically, the purpose is to identify informative lessons through two studies of policy making, first in the Emirate-level Abu Dhabi Police (ADP) and second in the federal Ministry of Interior (MOI). The focus was also expanded to understand any OL that took place within the PPP by studying the reactions, actions, behaviours, practices and decisions of those translating PPP lessons

from one level and organisational department. This author reflected throughout her research on how her findings could be used in empirical ways; these practical conclusions and recommendations are found through several chapters of this thesis.

Furthermore, the research sought to improve academic and practical understanding and knowledge about a variety of public policy-related topics within the context of the Global South. This research also sought to study the contextual and practical knowledge generated by OL and utilised in PPP by comparing, at its simplest, what was initially planned to what finally occurred. In this sense, academic theories can be applied to real life examples to derive useful insight and research. In terms of practice, the lessons learned for each stage of PPP can be used to directly provide guidance to other governmental organisations within the UAE.

This thesis has significant practical merit, as professionally-oriented research often does, by providing data and analysis specifically related to the topic of interest: in this case, PPP development and execution in the federal and Emirate-level public administration, and the uneven application of NPM principles in this setting. For example, the author outlines the PPP cycle as it exists in Emirati public administration, and discusses some of the practical challenges faced by the Emirati government in its uneven and problematic application of NPM principles. But the author strives to put these practical findings in a larger theoretical context, and expects that the findings and

discussion can be applied to a wider range of case studies, beyond the UAE.

As Nutley, Davies, and Walter (2002) note, public policy and related practices are informed by evidence. Evidence-based policies and practices help researchers and analysts to improve the use of evidence by considering the daily progress of activities in specific contexts (Nutley et al. 2002). Evidence-based policies and practices can also be used to make recommendations to inform future practice; this thesis makes such a contribution. The present research aimed to interpret the organisational experience during the deployment of a PPP with reference to the relationship between the formulated process, current practices and the available evidence. For example, the author reflected on how different types of policy are developed or implemented and what the influence was on the process itself, by employing triple-loop learning (Dewey 1944; Blackler et al. 2001; Wang and Ahmed 2003; Tomblin 2010). This thesis puts into practice the notion of evidence-based practice and aimed to ground itself in the knowledge-based practice concept in order to translate people's experience into valuable practices that may be adopted by other organisations (Glasby 2011).

There is always tension between policy makers and academics over the use of the evidence-based approach. Sometimes a policy's outcome is already defined even before the policy is formulated, and policy development is mundane. Often, however, the policy process is dynamic, and academics such as Hill (2013) and Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009) argue that, in order to

understand and analyse the policy process in practice, a policy should follow a rational or linear approach: identify problems, verify related evidence, formulate a policy, develop an implementation plan, and then deliver the policy. This PPP approach, referred to in this thesis as the 'Western PPP model', provides insight into how policy is made.

Exploring such issues provides a better understanding of policy formulation, with its accompanying negotiations of power and interest between the policy parties, and the process of making decisions with reference to an organisation's capabilities and context. The process is not simple: it includes formulation, implementation and evaluation (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). Currently, it is considered iterative and continuous; it is likely to reflect the state of society and of politics (Roberts and King 1991). Making decisions is very complex and influenced by the type of policy in question, the available supporting evidence and the parties involved (Howlett et al. 2009). Moreover, it is not a linear process, but takes two approaches in turn: first it takes a descriptive approach which claims that a policy should be developed with reference to the current situation and its practices (analysis of need); second it takes a formative approach which outlines what ideally should happen, so as to enhance the quality of the policy (analysis of the policy) (Hill 2013).

The sociology of the organisation or political system contributes to the PPP, a point which is discussed thoroughly in this thesis. National culture permits the policy maker to interpret the actions performed in the organisational

context. This reminds all readers that policy development studies are a branch of social science research - the social subjectivities of daily life are relevant to experiences such as PPP. Research is influenced by politics, such as the power of the state, the laws, regulations, institutions or organisations; this power is habitually referred to in the context of restrictions on data or action (Howlett 1991; Howlett et al. 2009). Meanwhile, politics which affect data generation may be loosely used when policy studies take on the task of presenting the complexity and ambiguity of the clash between what policy should be and what is actually delivered. These issues maintain relevance throughout this work.

### 1.2 Research Aims and Questions

Before presenting research, it is advisable to clearly articulate the research aims, the expected contributions of the work, and the general questions which drive research (Shugert 1979; Rojon and Saunders 2015). This research aims to increase the existing knowledge (of theories and practices) with direct reference to the practical application of NPM and OL during the deployment of PPP within Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and Abu Dhabi Police Force (ADP) in the UAE. Although this research might be considered descriptive, it also aims to be objective, moving beyond description to explore, evaluate and interpret a number of theoretical ideas in ways that contribute to gaps in academic and practice-oriented literatures.

This research aims to study PPP in the public sector in UAE, since the

country is currently aiming to improve and develop its public sector services in response population growth, economic expansion, and increased international exposure. For example, the government is preparing to be ready for full automation before the Expo 2020. The context of this study is examined in much greater detail in Chapter 2. This research is expected to encourage productive dialogue between policy practitioners in the UAE and international academic researchers who study PPP, with a goal of more informed decision-making. The purpose is to reflect the nature of the deployment of PPP through contextualising the knowledge derived from bringing techniques, tools and practices to the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policy. This research examines the practices at each stage of PPP through data generated during inside action research. The fundamental concepts of PPP are similar all over the world, but their implementation are varied; this thesis demonstrates that Global South examples of PPP cycles can follow very different trajectories based on their socio-political circumstances.

As this thesis unfolds, the author explores a variety of theoretical concepts relating to PPP development and implementation, the utilisation of NPM in the Global South, and competing concepts of OL; an overarching research aim is to further add to academic knowledge of these topics in the unique case example of the UAE. Adding to the discourse surrounding application of NPM or OL principles in Global South will allow the author to make a valuable contribution to academic understandings of non-Western peoples and

practices.

The author has a number of objectives she accomplishes with this thesis, which serve as central themes guiding the work:

- To explore the application of principles of PPP and NPM in the UAE and both the federal and Emirate-levels.
- To evaluate the impact of Emirati cultural values on the implementation of NPM principles in a real-world command and control public administration.
- To utilize OL theories to generate recommendations regarding interorganisational learning and interdependencies between federal-level and Emirate-level organisations.
- To provide evidence-based insight into the development of PPP models and the application of NPM principles in the public sector of the UAE.
- To provide recommendations and discuss issues of concern and practice as related to PPP or NPM, which will be of practical use to policy makers and government officials in the UAE and the Global South.

As a result of accomplishing these objectives, the author is able to draw conclusions relating to her overarching, reflective research questions that drive this thesis:

- How do Western theories regarding PPP, NPM, and OL (drawn from many of the authors described in previous chapters, such as Birkland, Hill, Hood, Howlett, and others) apply to the specific Global South case of the UAE?
- What lessons can be drawn from this UAE public administration research that can be applied to other Global South policy experiences? What practical recommendations can be made?

Discussions of these objectives and questions are found throughout the reflective findings in Chapters 7 and 8.

### 1.3 Methods

This research study utilised an insider action research methodology (Coghlan and Brannick 2015); the author served as a Strategic Advisor in the ADP and MOI during the PPP from 2012 to 2015. In this role, she was able to hold the dual role of participant and researcher. By using a nested insider action research cycles, the author was able to explore ideas relating to public policy development, stakeholder involvement in policy planning, and OL. Utilising Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) notion of core research cycles and thesis research cycles, this thesis research allowed the author/participant to simultaneously advise on public policy development in the UAE and reflect on the efficacy of PPP in action. Because the author was charged with applying lessons learned from Emirate-level PPP deployment to the federal-level, there was ample room to execute a pair of insider action research cycles. These first two core research cycles fell within the overarching thesis research project, which was based on Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 2000) models of reflection and provided insight into the quality of action research in the UAE and the place of NPM in Middle Eastern public administration.

During research, it became possible to reconceptualise the study on a third level as a pair of action research cycles oriented toward studying OL. As will be described in the following Chapter 6, after a year of PPP planning and development at the federal level, it became clear near the end of 2013 that there would be significant setbacks to any PPP implementation, largely due to lack of

focus, understanding, and communication between stakeholders. As such, the author was able to use her position's responsibilities to reflect on the challenges of the 2013 PPP and apply any lessons learned to the 2014 PPP planning and development process. This two-year process of OL was reflected upon and documented in the author's second of two core research cycles.

Data collection was primarily focused on three main avenues: observation and informal interviewing; journaling and reflective memos; and document analysis. The author attended dozens of meetings, conducted over a hundred interviews and discussions, analyzed years of organisational policy documents, and reflected in extensive journals that demonstrated overarching themes over time.

### 1.4 General Findings

The methods described above were heavily dependent on the practice of reflection, and as such, much of the data generated is reflective and highly qualitative. Earlier iterations of this thesis' findings were heavily data-driven, such that the author lost sight of the larger theoretical and empirical questions which had initially driven the research. However, reorganisation of findings through initiative periods of reflection, and a focus on the insider action research approach to data generation allowed the author to better conceptualise the larger-scale academic and practice findings that emerged from this doctoral research.

The author determined that findings and conclusions supported by her data could be categorised into theoretical findings, empirical findings, and methodological reflections; each class of findings draws from different steps and cycles in the various core and thesis insider action research projects that were concurrently reflected upon in this thesis. In addition, each category provides unique insight into the nature of public administration within the UAE, and translates those observations to a Global North audience.

Insider action research provides those already situated in organisations the opportunity to explore the experiences of social institutions and groups in real time. This allows for significant theoretical contributions derived from the unique positions and trust relationships that already exist for the researcher. The author's core research cycles provided reflection on three major bodies of theoretical work: implications of PPP theory, applications of NPM models, and engagement with OL debates.

Theoretical findings on PPP focus on some of the conceptual challenges that delayed PPP efforts and hampered PPP success in the MOI. Approaches to flexibility and planning are discussed to build upon existing ideas of PPP stages, particularly in non-democratic contexts. The author then examines new public management (NPM) and engages in dialogue with Mansour (2017) and Salem (Salem and Jarrar 2012; Salem 2016), agreeing that decentralisation and outsourcing efforts in UAE public administration have not been entirely successful. Finally, the author refines her discussion of OL in the Emirati

government sector by focusing on theories of triple-loop learning (Wang and Ahmed 2003) and interorganisational learning (Tucker et al. 2007; Fortis et al. 2016).

One of the main goals of this thesis is to provide empirical discussions of PPP challenges and lessons learned; these commentaries will be beneficial for many Global South contexts, but will be most beneficial for researchers hoping to understand public administration in the UAE at both the federal and Emirate-levels. Many of the empirical findings of this thesis are centered around PPP documentation, challenges surrounding stakeholders' involvement, and practical discussions of time and expectation management. These empirical findings allow the author to provide recommendations to PPP practitioners based on reflections generated during research. These recommendations can improve the standard practices of the Emirati public sector and beyond. These findings are of the utmost importance because they explore an under-researched subject (PPP and NPM in the Global South) and provide the foundation for practical recommendations which will help Emirati and other public administrators to better serve the public.

In addition, this research was conducted from a participatory position; once the author fully actualised theories regarding insider action research, she was able to operationalise her reflective data into clear research cycles that illuminated the most important findings that could be drawn from her data. As such, the author's findings also include reflections on the use of insider action

research, essentially bringing to life the recommendation for thesis-level meta-analysis best articulated in the work of Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002). These methodological reflections also address the challenges and opportunities presented by conducting insider action research within a culture whose client-patron orientation directly affects public policy development in the Global South governmental organisation studied.

One of the major strengths of this thesis is the position of the author: by conducting inside action research in an advisory position within a Global South ministry during rapid deployment of new public management principles, the author expects to contribute a specific and valuable voice to academic discourse regarding NPM and other topics discussed. By adding the reflections and voices of a female Arab government official and her co-participants, the author will expand the overall understanding of how effectively Western academic theories (relating to PPP/NPM/OL) translate to Global South practice and experience. Thus, the author provides several reflections on Emirates' public administration and OL, as well as reflections on her own experience as a researcher in a politically challenging position.

### 1.5 Roadmap of Thesis

After this roadmap, the thesis begins with an discussion of the United Arab Emirates and its rapid modernisation, with reference to federal and Emirati bureaucratic organisation and policy development processes. Chapter Two *(UAE Background and Research Context)* places the author's organisations

within the context of public administration in Abu Dhabi and the UAE. This chapter will also explain the author's role within the MOI and ADP, and situate her position within the PPP these organisations experienced from 2012 to 2015.

After the introduction of the author's research context, three chapters will provide the presentation and analysis of relevant literature necessary to share the findings of the insider action research conducted by the author. Chapter Three *(PPP and NPM: Changing Approaches to Public Administration)* focuses on the public policy process (PPP) and its relation to New Public Management (NPM). The role of government in the PPP in the Global South will be discussed, to place the author's Emirati example within a larger global context. The problems translating modernising practices in Global South public administrations into NPM models will be explored, as will possible alternative models of policy development to apply to this Emirati example.

Because of the research expanded to explore OL after the initial PPP development period was not as successful as originally hoped within the MOI, Chapter Four *(Relevant Organisational Learning Scholarship)* provides a brief review of the salient points on OL. Again, the goal of this review is to place the author's experiences in the UAE within a larger academic and geographic context. Attention is paid to different types of OL, as well as how OL has already been studied within the UAE and the Global South.

Chapter Five *(Theoretical Foundations for Reflective Methods)* provides the review of literature relevant to the methodology used in this research:

reflective insider action research relying on observation, reflective journaling, and content analysis. As an adviser to the MOI and ADP, the author had a specific role as participant and researcher, necessitating a flexible research methodology that was attuned to the challenges and opportunities the inside position afforded.

The chapter *(6: Methodology)* that then follows puts this literature review to work by explaining the methodology used in this thesis. As described above, Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) notion of core research cycles and thesis research cycles was used to conceptualise the multiple levels of research that were conducted; insider action research was the methodology used to structure the research cycles and ensure high quality data was generated. Data collection methods and logistics are explored.

Chapter Seven *(Findings and Recommendations)* is comprised of the findings determined from the data generated over the course of the various cycles of insider action research. While data generation was extensive, the author has elected to focus on certain core themes in order to organise findings into groups of academic or practical significance. The author will begin by exploring her findings as related to public policy process development, new public management, and OL, all within the context of the Global South and the client-patron mindset of the UAE. The author then discusses findings which directly provide insight into the UAE itself, as related to public administration and policy development. Finally, the author discusses her findings based on self-

reflection, discussing challenges faced when conducting insider action research in the Global South.

Chapter Eight *(Discussion)* gives the author the opportunity to take a step back and reflect on her findings in a more generalised manner. During this chapter, she achieves two goals: to provide commentary on some of the empirical or practical findings drawn from her data, which contribute to the discourse about policy development in the UAE; and to address the gaps in literature which she had previously outlined, and then place her findings within those gaps.

The final chapter *(9: Conclusions and Future Research)* of this thesis briefly summarises the main theoretical and empirical conclusions which can be drawn from this research. This includes discussion of the relevance of this study to public policy process development in the UAE and the organisations researched. Chapter Nine also discusses limitations of the research project, and offers suggestions for future research which could build off of the data generated and analyzed here. It is the author's expectation that the thesis will provide insight into the unique specificities of the UAE public sector while also contributing to general academic discourses and empirical practice to allow for the findings to be of interest to a wide range of scholars, practitioners, and readers.

## Chapter 2: UAE Background and Research Context

A significant driver of this thesis research is the goal of presenting evidence and reflections gathered in practice within the government of the UAE. Many of the PPP, NPM, and OL theories which are explored in this thesis were developed in OECD countries and are most successfully applied to cases in West. There is significant merit in contributing to the growing body of literature which addresses the application of NPM or OL theories in the Global South. But, in order to present a thesis so situated within the public administration of the UAE during a pivotal period of rapid modernisation, it is necessary to explore the context of the study. This chapter provides the research background of the thesis, from the federal level to the Emirate-level, and then provides the reader with a clear chronology of the research study. This study description of 2012-2015 will illustrate to the reader the various research cycles and opportunities to examine topics related to PPP, NPM, and OL, so that the reader has a clear understanding of the scope of the research while progressing through the literature reviews in subsequent chapters.

This chapter is divided into two core sections. The first section *(Research Background)* focuses on the background context for this research: the UAE most broadly, Abu Dhabi Emirate more specifically, and the MOI and ADP most directly. The Emirates are a unique country in terms of their political organisation, requiring review so that the reader can understand the interdependencies inherent in the Emirati system. The reader also requires an

understanding of the relationships between organisations so that roles, including the author's role, are clearer to those who are not insiders in the MOI/ADP. The second section *(Study Background and Relevant Chronology)* walks the reader through the chronology of this research study. Over the two years of research, the author continuously balanced a set of roles and requirements as both the ADP and MOI produced new policy initiatives and sought to learn from and improve PPP in the UAE.

## 2.1 Research Context

This study is set in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which were established in 1971. It is an Arab, Muslim country, and Islamic values are deeply ingrained in Emirati corporate and governmental culture (Suliman 2006). The country is comprised of seven Emirates: Abu Dhabi is the capital and the others are Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Aum al-Quoin, Ras Al Khaimah and Al Fujairah. This federalised set of monarchies is ruled by a president. This Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member dominated by cosmopolitan urban centers fueled by petro-based wealth and rapidly expanding financial sectors. The founder of UAE, HH Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, aimed to unify the Emirates so that they could withstand internal and external threats and challenges – something the people of the UAE have embodied in their aspiration to develop their country.

These Emirates operate highly autonomously, under the federal UAE

cabinet of over thirty ministries, including the MOI. Thus, all public sector administration can fall into three categories, each with their own limitations: federal government, Emirate-level government, and municipal government. The UAE political system is that of a constitutional federation allowing interdependency between the Emirate-level organisations and local city governments to support a diverse economy and flexible options for municipal and Emirate-wide systems, bearing in mind that all levels government action must not contradict federal rules and regulations. This system permits competitive advantage to be sought between different Emirates.

The government of the Emirates, like many in the region, is based on the idea of client-patron relationships, a characteristic which cannot be ignored in studying the development of public policy in the UAE. As Mansour explains,

> In the socio-political context of the UAE, characterised by a patron-client relationships on which political legitimacy is based and ethnic groups who behave softly like interest groups albeit in a different manner, the major concern of UAE government is that the privatisation policy should not disrupt the fabric of the well-woven patron-client ties by disrupting the provision of social services to citizens and their job security. (2017: 120)

The petro-economies are marked by neopatrimonialism, and this is reflected in the structure, composition, and staffing of several Emirati ministries. This worldview also explains why the Emirati government, like many in the region, clearly separates the rights of citizens and foreign workers and other expatriates (Vora 2010; Mansour 2016). Emirati citizens make up approximately 11-12% of the population of the UAE (GLMM Programme 2014); at the same time, foreign

workers and immigrants from the Indian/Pakistani subcontinent alone compose over 40% of the population living in the UAE (GLMM Programme 2014). The Emirati government provides public services to all people living in the UAE, but citizens are often given preferential treatment or economic advantage as a social subsidy, as a privilege of citizenship. Mansour (2017) argues that public sector development in the UAE has been paternalistic precisely because of this larger worldview.

As will be discussed later, the application of NPM principles in the UAE must be contextualised within the setting of the client-patron corporate monarchical system of the Emirates. This results in a different experience of public administration development, and “it should be emphasised from the outset that The UAE government avoids all policies that disturb the ruled-ruler relationship, especially massive policies of privatisation, because of its impact the provision of social and economic services provided for free to nationals as well as their as impact of on citizens’ employment” (Mansour 2017: 120). These constraints translate into serious limitations on how willing the monarchy is to support privatisation; instead, outsourcing and contracting-out marks the federal and Emirate-level public services.

### 2.1.1 UAE Economy and New Public Management

The UAE is considered by the World Economic Forum to be one of the fastest growing economies in the world. It has produced some remarkable

success stories of economic growth and business development, rising from the desert in the last fifty years into a series of shining metropoli. Its public services in the 21st century face the challenge of unpredictable increases in customer service demand, due to the predicted radical changes in technology, lifestyle and the environment.

Like many fast-growing economies in the Global South, determining how the UAE's experience should be situated within a theoretical framework - as NPM as opposed to modernisation as a response to government restructuring and rapid economic growth - is a serious challenge. This thesis explores OL that occurred during development of PPPs within the MOI and ADP, processes which could be viewed both through the lens of the basic modernisation of public administration in a relatively young country and as a paradigm shift toward NPM. The UAE has adopted many of the principles of NPM, as they are discussed in Chapter Three, but the application of these principles has not been a smooth process.

Salem, in much of his work (Salem and Jarrar 2012; Salem 2016), argues that the UAE has moved, in the past decade, from a "silos" approach to a more "competitive approach." This competitive approach, he argues, has increased government efficiency in the UAE, as promised by the models of NPM, but has led the Emirates' public administration to retain many of the worst characteristics of the silo approach while failing to develop the trust or collaboration needed to make the competitive, outsourcing-oriented nature of decentralised NPM

successful. According to Salem and Jarrar's (2012) surveys, Emirati public servants participate in the decentralisation of their roles and responsibilities, but still want to maintain pre-existing managerial hierarchies, leading to resentment and mistrust (2012: 3). Emirati public servants are now encouraged to compete, but still want to compete within the same top-down, client-patron, nepotistic and hierarchical system that has marked the UAE's public administration since its conception. Salem and Jarrar conclude that "there is a need for developing locally grown systems to overcome existing cultural barriers in order to achieve a higher level of 'social trust' in the UAE public sector" (2012: 5); their recommendation is the use of technology and eGovernment to break down barriers to decentralisation and encourage competition that is outcome-oriented rather than reinforcing of traditional managerial hierarchies.

Mansour (2017) argues that the legitimacy given to the Emirati government by providing services to its citizens as their patron means that macro-level, federal services like education and healthcare are more likely to face foreign competition rather than privatisation. He also argues that many more local services, such as water and electric, telecommunications, and public transportation, were already handled privately, and thus not subject to NPM (Mansour 2017: 121-122). Thus, Mansour argues that at a macro-level, NPM development in UAE has not been entirely successful. In contrast, he argues that NPM has been more successful at the micro-level in relation to public and private economic culture. He argues that frameworks, TQM, e-Government, and

other tools of NPM have been successfully integrated into the the UAE's public sector modernisation process (Mansour 2017: 126-130).

Mansour's separation of NPM into macro- and micro-levels seems somewhat arbitrary, based more on findings than the actual structure of the UAE's government. His binary, however, does draw attention to the separation of public policy implementation at the federal and Emirate-levels, an analysis with and differences between relevance to this thesis because the research operates within a federal organisation and a Emirate-level organisation. Mansour largely avoids the discussion of municipal government organisation, as will this thesis's author, because of how specifically oriented each local government would be.

The separation of the UAE government into the federal, Emirate, and municipal levels creates advantages and challenges. Federal rules can be limiting to some Emirates and not others, and not all Emirates have equally sized economies. As such, PPP development and implementation is different at the federal and Emirate-level, and those differences will be reflected upon in this thesis though analysis of the MOI (federal ministry) and the ADP (Emirate-level police force). It should be noted that this thesis research does not delve into policy development at the municipal level, though certainly that is an area for other scholars to approach to further expand upon some of the findings of this work.

### 2.1.2 UAE Federal Administration: The Case of the Ministry of the Interior

The Emirates' federal government is led by a president, who is elected from the Supreme Council (the seven rules of the seven Emirates) every five years. Though not required, the position of president is generally reserved for the ruling families, and has been held by the Emir of Abu Dhabi (the largest Emirate) for the entirety of the UAE's history. Though not required, the vice-presidency has always been held by the Emir of Dubai, the second largest Emirate; the vice-president is also the Prime Minister, who leads the Council of Ministers. This council constitutes the federal executive, legislative, and judicial bodies. The Federal National Council supports the legislative decisions of the Council of Ministers, and the Federal Judiciary supports the judiciary needs of the Council; both bodies are by appointment at the royal families of the Emirates. The Ministry of the Interior (MOI) is one of these ministries.

Readers particularly interested in the public administration in the UAE at the federal level are advised to examine Simon Okoth's (2015: 263-280) outstanding analysis of the structure of the Emirati federal government and the process of public policy and legislative development. His work gives a far clearer explanation of the logistics behind federal level ministries such as the MOI, but it possesses a level of detail unnecessary for this thesis. Still, the UAE's unique federal structure is not intuitive to those outside of the Emirates, and Okoth's work will illuminate the underlying structures which shape decision-making at the highest levels of the federal government. This thesis instead focuses on a

specific federal organisation, the MOI, and one of its Emirate-level subsidiaries, the ADP.

The MOI was established when the Emirates were unified in 1971 under Federal Law No. 1. The ministry was charged with overseeing a number of fields, most notably ensuring safety and security of the country's citizens across a range of established sectors, including overseeing policing at various levels, controlling affairs of federal and local naturalisation and residency, ensuring traffic and road safety, and maintaining safety for the facilities and properties of the government and people. This includes providing services to all segments of society, from individuals to institutions. As a federal ministry, this task is spread over all seven Emirates. Hence, the MOI has focused on building an integrated business platform between the seven Emirates to ensure the provision of standardised quality services to the public; this is a large part of the responsibilities of the author in her role as a participant in the MOI.

The MOI is therefore somewhat different from similar 'domestic/home affairs' ministries in many other parts of the world, in that it encompasses five key sectors: the police force, nationality and residence, civil defence, road safety, prisons and rehabilitation. There are three additional support sectors included in the MOI 's remit: support services (for finance, IT, HR, etc.), strategy and performance, and social/customer services. In sum, the MOI 's organisational structure covers eight sectors and contains 48 general directorates and 243 departments. The estimated number of services provided

by the MOI totals above 350, about a quarter of all the services provided across the entire UAE government.

The MOI's organisational structure reflects the ministry's wide diversity, which aims to achieve a high level of coordination and integration in pursuing its strategic goals between the various public leaders in the seven Emirates of the federation. In addition, its organisational structure is supported by a joint federal framework of officials who meet regularly to coordinate work and follow up the general application of the federal strategy. Additionally, the MOI structure is flexible and capable of updating its approach to meet new requirements and directions as the government issues them.

The MOI has been able, over the past four decades, to perform its duties of law enforcement and the provision of security and safety within the variety of cultures, languages, religions, and different demographic patterns that make up Emirati society, without prejudice. The MOI maintains the country's movement towards peaceful evolution and modernity, aiming to encourage investment and tourism. Recently, many governments of the world have faced security and safety challenges from the increased frequency of terrorist incidents; the Emirates have largely been able to avoid this trend, in no small part because of the efforts of MOI staff. The MOI has a vital part to play in securing the stability of the UAE and its economic, social and political interests. These issues are reflected in the clarity of its strategic directions and the priority given to ensuring public safety, security and service against the regional and international

challenges faced by the UAE.

### 2.1.3 UAE Emirate Administration: The Case of the ADP

The Abu Dhabi Emirate is the physically largest of the seven United Arab Emirates by a significant amount of territory; the city of Abu Dhabi is the second largest city after Dubai and hosts a population of just under three million inhabitants. The city is the home to the royal Emir, who also serves as the President of the UAE, making Abu Dhabi City the capital city of both the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the country of the UAE. As a microcosm for the country, Abu Dhabi has experienced rapid economic growth, development, and construction. The Emirate-level Abu Dhabi government oversees the municipal (local) governments of Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and various smaller cities, towns, and villages in the Western Region.

Abu Dhabi Executive Council (EC) is the local executive authority of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. It assists the Emir in carrying out his duties and powers, through regular meetings to set the Emirate's general policy. In order to achieve general well-being of the Emirate, the EC works to: set development plans and supervise their execution; authorise projects, laws, and decrees before submitting them to the Emir; supervise work flow in departments and local entities; and coordinate the joint efforts of multiple bodies.

The Abu Dhabi Police Department (ADP) was established 60 years ago, before the Emirates united, and has operated as a public entity in the local government of Abu Dhabi since its inception. It is the UAE’s biggest police force,

with a provision of service covering the whole of Abu Dhabi Emirate - 80% of the area of the federation. See Figure 1 for a representation of the three levels of UAE government; note, this thesis does not examine policy at the municipal-level.


**Figure 1: Organisational structure between MOI and ADP**

The ADP budget comes from Emirate-level government, and it operates under the Deputy Prime Minister of the UAE, who is also the country's Minister

of the Interior. The ADP enforces the ministry's regulations in alignment with its strategy and integrates with other police forces federally through an effective governance structure. Currently, the ADP provides over 130 services and has 36,000 employees in 42 departments. Thus, the ADP is the best pilot environment for projecting a holistic picture of the impact of a policy project deployed across the MOI.

The commander of the ADP is HH Shaikh Saif bin Zayed, who is at the same time the Minister of the Interior. Moreover, the employees of the ADP are also employed by the MOI, which is empowered to move them across to other Emirates if their services are needed. This relationship often means that ADP employees have interdependent relationships with people across multiple departments and even Emirates, because each ADP employee is also an MOI employee, meaning each has their own networks of collaboration and coordination. This means that many of the policies developed in the ADP are interdependent with policies from other MOI departments, especially in regards to implementation.

The scope of the ADP policies is limited to the safety, security, and policing functions of Abu Dhabi Emirate (Abu Dhabi Island, Al Ain and the Western Region). ADP policy complies with local laws and regulations and does not contradict federal systems. These policies general fall into one of three categories:

- uni-functional policy: used at the operational level and owned by one department

- cross-functional policy: involves several departments working together and may include external parties; such policies are considered strategic since their impact causes radical change
- management policy: used for organising the organisation's daily work through support services, (HR, accounting, quality control, etc.)

All three kinds of policy are developed by using the ADP's PPP and deployed by ADP departments, and are of relevance to this thesis. A governance system of decision-making (approval, issue, budget, accountability, etc.) is applied within PPP, depending on the type of policy.

It is within this context, of both the UAE and more specifically the MOI/ADP, that this research sits - a study of PPP development and deployment within a heavily client-patron system in the midst of NPM expansion. The specific logistics of this research, particularly the chronology of the various PPP stages, are worth mapping before moving forward.

## 2.2 Study Background and Relevant Chronology

In Feb 2012, a major policing operation failed so significantly that two policemen in Abu Dhabi were seriously injured. As a result, the ADP saw a "policy window" (Okoth 2015: 265) and sought to develop two major cross-functional policies on the use of force and rules of pursuit. These two policies were initially drafted in April 2012, and then continuously viewed and reviewed for 3 months by different interested stakeholders, such as the MOI and the municipal police forces in Abu Dhabi Emirate that would be tasked with

implementation of the policies. Because this PPP was cross-functional (in that it affected police training, drug and crime prevention, station management, strategic initiatives, weapons and armory departments, etc.), many stakeholders were interested in the PPP itself even before the policy was approved by HH Sheikh Saif.

Separately, in July 2012, MOI Minister HH Sheikh Saif and Major-General Naser instructed each of the forty-five permanent committees to develop two federal policies related to their current challenges and functions in the coming year i.e. 2013. This decree was a massive undertaking for the Strategy Department to manage. Deploying new PPP in an organisation as massive as the MOI is very difficult, not because of any specific organisational characteristics, but because of the wider geographical coverage needed, which includes the seven Emirates' budgets and systems, each further complicated by municipal bodies. Furthermore, the number of stakeholders involved is bigger and reaching a consensus is more challenging at the federal level. Therefore, the MOI decided to evaluate an Emirate-level PPP project as a test case, to determine what lessons could be learned from the Emirate-level and applied to the federal level.

Abu Dhabi is the physically largest of the seven Emirates, and has the largest operating budget; thus, the ADP was chosen as the most appropriate test case. The two 2012 ADP policies regarding use of force and rules of pursuit were chosen to serve as a sort of 'pilot study' for PPP deployment. The author,

therefore, was not only involved in the federal level PPP development at the decree of MOI, but was also responsible for evaluating and reflecting upon the Emirate-level ADP PPP implementation for use of force and rules of pursuit. This means that two core action research cycles were necessary - one in which the author researched the ADP PPP framework, and then a subsequent one in which those reflections informed the PPP development process at the MOI level.

The remainder of 2012 was spent focusing on preparation and assessment of the federal-level PPP proposals. The author's Strategic Department established a MOI Policy Section Team for the purposes of managing and maintaining effective deployment of PPP across the federal government during the PPP development process in 2013. The Strategic Department issued the strategic tender for establishing this PPP and allocated budgets. The department establish project teams in ADP and MOI, and a Policy Evaluation Committee (PEC) to provide feedback and responsiveness during the PPP development process The PECs also made decisions about the need for policy by assessing organisational capabilities and current problems. The Policy Section Team of the author's Strategic Department also followed up and review proposals of on the ninety policies from the forty-five federal committees as they came in, and assessed their merit. At the end of 2012, the Strategic Department was also responsible for nominating an external consultation company that would provide the outsourced public policy consultation services needed by the MOI.

2013 was the first phase of the MOI strategic initiative planning. The MOI Policy Section Team ran the kickoff meeting, which defined the clear roles and expectations of and from all policy stakeholders. The first half of the year was then spent drafting new versions of PPP documentation which would guide the PPP process. This meant delivering PPP documents such as the assessment report of 2012 PPP model, producing the second version of T1 and T2, and issuing the PDF. The Strategy Department also developed the risk assessment criteria, prioritisation and study impact criteria, and authorisation matrix. This also meant working with external consultants to develop the governance framework (GF) documentation, a prolonged nine month process that required several drafts and collaboration with the stakeholders.

Concurrently, at the ADP, the author and her ADP Policy Section Team continued to deploy and reflect on the development of the use of force and rules of pursuit policies of 2012-2013. This included the development of new T1 and T2 documents, issuing new PDFs, writing governance and risk assessment criteria, developing study impact criteria, creating an authorisation matrix, and other parts of the pair of policies. The lessons learned from these experiences were then funneled into the development of MOI PPP proposals.

Starting in June of 2013, the MOI Policy Section Team drafted plans for the twenty-five highest priority policy suggestions from the ninety policy proposals which had been presented to the MOI Policy Section Team. The team required each committee responsible for these policies to fill out a second

version of their T1 and T2 documents for PEC approval. The MOI also improved longer-term planning by developing training materials, creating a three years plan for the policy implementation, and projecting a five-year roadmap for helping each policy unit to reach its full capacity as part of the overarching MOI policy push of 2013.

This included bringing in elements lessons learned from the PPP development in the ADP (because the author was a member of both Policy Section Teams). The MOI Policy Section Team conducted forty sessions of on-the-job training as part of the development and implementation of the first twelve policies. The MOI Policy Section Team also prepared for engagement between policy owners and SMEs to improve policy drafts (essentially plan SMEs contributions). Within the ADP, the author and her ADP policy section team continued to follow up on and reflect upon the implementation of the use of force and rules of pursuit policies.

However, it was clear at the end of 2013 that developing each of the twenty-five policies had not been achieved as planned. This because each policy was more complex than expected, and PPP development had not been properly oriented toward executing these policies. Twenty-two of the twenty-five proposals passed PEC approval (see Appendix 2); three were rejected by the PEC and were closed. By end of 2013, twelve policies had moved through stages 1, 2, and 3 of PPP (studying policy need and drafting policies, including approval from the PEC head) and ten policies were not yet ready for PEC

approval. By this point it had become clear that, in many cases, policy teams were more focused on creating a PPP than actually supporting committees to develop executable policy. The author and her MOI Policy Section Team made a series of recommendations to the consultants and committees regarding PPP development, based both on the lessons learned from the ADP policy deployments and the observations made during the first largely unsuccessful year of MOI policy development in 2012-2013. These recommendations are further discussed in Chapter Seven of this thesis.

This second phase of the MOI policy development and planning (the efforts in 2014 to shepherd the twenty-two PPP initiatives to readiness for implementation) also meant that the author was able to create a second pair of action research cycles, this time to study OL, by researching the 2013 MOI-level PPP development process and then adjusting her research to observe the 2014 MOI-level PPP development process to see how the organizational leadership had learned and created an environment conducive to learning. These multiple, concurrent cycles of insider action research are more clearly articulated and developed in Chapter Six of this thesis.

In 2014, the author continued to serve in her role as an adviser both on the Emirate-level ADP policy development, implementation, and reflection project and on the federal-level MOI PPP development policies, which were now limited to twenty-two proposals. The outsourced consultants' contracts were renewed for 2014 as support services for developed policies only. The UAE

leadership's plan for 2014 was to finish developing the best policy drafts, so it was important to identify all related stakeholders and manage the contributions of all Strategic Advisers (SAs) as related to each developing policy.

This created some problems with the external consultants, who proposed an unsatisfactory approach to working with the twenty-two policy initiatives that were moving at various paces of development. In early 2014, the external consultants suggested breaking the second round of PPP project planning into two streams. The first stream, provided support by one team of consultants, would move the twelve policies which had already received PEC approval into stages 4 and 5 of the PPP process (consultation and approval for implementation). The second stream, which would also be supported by its own team of consultants, would focus on developing the remaining 10 policies through stages 1 and 2 (studying policy need and drafting policies) for PEC approval. The external consultancy removed all of the consultants who had worked in 2013 to support the committees in proposing the first twelve policies, and instead proposed bringing in completely new staff to support both streams of policy development.

The author and her MOI Policy Section Team rejected this proposal, finding it problematic for a variety of reasons, most important of which is that there would be no continuity of knowledge or experience gained from the first year of MOI PPP planning if the consulting contract did not include the same personnelle. In addition, there were concerns about maintaining quality

throughout the overall MOI PPP planning initiative if different consulting teams were supporting different groups of policies. Finally, it had become clear during the 2013 MOI PPP development efforts that many of the new policy initiatives informed each other and shared stakeholders; having two different teams of consultants supporting some policy owners and not others could have led to failures in communication and wasted time.

The author and her Strategy Department countered the external consultants' proposal by requiring that two of the previous consultants who had worked on the twelve successful PPP initiatives return in 2014. In addition, the two consultant teams who would be supporting each set of committees in their respective streams would be required to actively develop approaches for sharing knowledge and promoting learning within the MOI; both teams would be required to liaison with the MOI to ensure this OL was occurring. Consultants were required to develop documents which captured changes or new ideas at each stage of PPP to ensure that everyone in both streams was aware of progress being made in PPP development. Thus, easily accessible documents were also required of the consultants in both streams, so all interconnected stakeholders could share knowledge.

Chapters Seven and Eight contain a more detailed discussion of these challenges faced in outsourcing to external consultants within the context of NPM in the UAE and how those challenges were faced within the context of OL. Generally, the author and her Strategy Department oversaw the efforts of the

consultants who provided support for each stream of PPP development, including the development of new PPP documentation, direction of on-the-job training for policy makers, and then execution of on-the-job training for stakeholders that would be implementing the policies.

Finally, by the end of 2014, the Strategic Department was ready to conclude the policy development of the twenty-two policies across the MOI, and began preparing for implementation. The policy owners (the leader of the committee responsible for deploying PPP to develop policy) then presented drafts of the twenty-two policies to MOI leaders for final approval. This meant that HH and the MOI Policy Council received a final implementation plan which represented the policy proposal, defined any relevant changes, and requested the requisite resources and budget. This allowed for the initiation of policy implementation, including budget allocation and policy delivery.

After reading this chronology, a reader familiar with tenets of PPP development theories, NPM theories, or OL theories will see opportunities for the author to use insider action research methods to explore these topics as both a participant and as a researcher. The author's thesis research uses data generated from reflecting on the above series of events in order to inform her discussions of PPP, NPM, and OL specifically within the Global South context of the UAE. However, before presenting the methods used to collect data during the above events, it is necessary to traverse the literature related to the theories which will inform the findings drawn from the data generated.

# Chapter 3: PPP and NPM: Challenging Approaches to Public Administration

As explained in the previous chapter, the UAE is experiencing rapid modernisation and economic growth. This includes a move toward new public management (NPM), although, as Mansour (2017) and Salem (Geray and Salem 2012; Salem and Jarrar 2012; Salem 2006, 2014, 2016) argue, NPM deployment in the UAE has been successful in some ways, and not in others. It has also been under-documented, largely because of the rapid changes occurring in the Emirati public administration. In many ways, the public policy process (PPP) in the UAE is itself rapidly modernising; as was also explained in the previous chapter, significant public policy reform within the MOI and more specifically the ADP created problems because of a lack of a clear process at the onset. PPP in the UAE has been built on the processes articulated by Hill (2013) and others (Dye 1972; Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980), but has been lacking in many of the aspects needed for success; this study will not only illuminate the evolution of PPP in the UAE through reflective insider action research, but will place PPP within the larger context of public policy research and the study of NPM.

Therefore, in order to situate the findings of this study, this chapter will delve into the complex relationship between PPP and NPM in the Global South, discussing the implications this study will have for the study of the PPP and

modernisation in the UAE. This chapter will also examine the importance of this study in discussing the difficulties with translating findings from the NPM literature to Global South case examples. To do this, first comes an exploration of the PPP literature, with attention paid to the stages of policy deployment, as these will be relevant when discussing the self-reflection occurring within the MOI and ADP. Second, this chapter will briefly touch on the NPM literature before explaining the difficulties in evaluating NPM in the Global South based on a largely Global North discourse. Finally, this chapter will lay the foundations for the research questions which inform the meta-level reflective insider action research of this thesis.

## 3.1 General Conceptions of the Public Policy Process

Public policy has many definitions, depending on different users and objectives. However, the variations influence the nature of policy-making very little (Howlett et al. 2009). Dye defines public policy as “anything that government chooses to do or not to do” (1972: 2). In Dye’s view, government is the prime agent for policy-making even if it consults or involves other parties or actors. Moreover, public policies may include and are not limited to laws, regulations, statutes and strategic programmes (Birkland 2015: 9). Ostrom (2005: 19) and Schneider and Ingram (1997: 2) note that public policies may include common rules or understanding behaviours that direct public service delivery. Public policy could also vary in goals and means, from being

procedural, substantive, or symbolic as an entire instrument.

Institutions, whether state, social, or international, are organisational structures with mutual relationships that influence the actors' behaviour and, accordingly, policy content (March and Olsen 1998; March et al. 2000). All organisations embed rules, systems procedures, norms, and frames that influence actors' behaviours and shape their perception – thus changing policy content and outcomes (Timmermans and Bleiklie 1999). In many cases, policy is created to clarify and implement these rules in ways that directly solve problems (Howlett et al. 2009).

It is well known that options are assessed on the basis of people's beliefs, ideas and experience of solutions, within the structure and context of their work. In addition, solutions are chosen not only because they are correct or easily applied but also because they are politically acceptable and administratively achievable (Majone 1975, 1989; Webber 1986). In fact, defining and interpreting policy solutions is problematic and mysterious, even when policy-makers agree. Furthermore, finding solutions commonly includes conflict if frustrated actors cannot advance their interests (Yee 1996; Callaghan and Schnell 2001; Afonso 2007). This is a common occurrence in the UAE, for example, where policy owners routinely ignored the input of stakeholders if it was politically expedient to do so.

One concept worth considering in the context of this thesis is what John Kingdon calls the policy "window of opportunity" (1995: 106). This refers to the

idea that, when certain events occur that capture the public imagination, there may be a pressure to enact policy, and even an opportunity to pass laws which may not be as popular at times of less public distress. Times of national tragedy are often cited as examples (Okoth 2015: 265) as policy windows because they give the political cover necessary to allow politicians to push legislation through. In the case of this thesis research, the near-deaths of two police officers in 2012 provided a policy window during which the ADP and MOI could prepare and implement new policies on police use of force.

### 3.1.1 The Policy Cycle

A series of phases organised in manageable cycles is needed to develop something as complex as most policies are. Western authors (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; Skok 1995; Bovens et al. 2001; Bridgman and Davis 2003; Colebatch 2006; Dunn 2015) who discuss policy cycles tend to use a very similar five step model, with only small variations on themes. Their steps are: 1) agenda setting, 2) formulation, 3) decision-making, 4) implementation, and 5) evaluation.

The articulation of policy cycle frameworks provides two interrelated advantages during the PPP. First, creating clear PPP cycles allows policy makers to distinguish each stage in the policy cycle, gauging the impact of actors, organisations and ideas for separate processing. Second, clear PPP cycles clarifie the interactive roles and relationships of actors, organisations and

ideas with each other at each stage (Sobeck 2003; Parag 2006, 2008).

Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009: 4-5) suggest that public policy similarly applies problem-solving approaches, indicating the actors' efforts in policy-making to match goals to means. They identify problems by deliberation and then use policy tools to frame suitable solutions. This matching process has two dimensions: the technical, identifying the relationships which best attain policy goals by choosing the ideal tools to generate optimal solutions to problems; and the political, which establishes solutions satisfying different actors by feasible and acceptable policy actions (Huitt 1968; Meltsner 1972; Majone 1975; May 2005). Policy is thus made through a process of solving problems, and policies can be viewed as solutions. Western authors (Hupe and Hill 2006; Howlett et al. 2009) further argue that PPP stages will adopt the same principles of problem solving; see Figure 2.

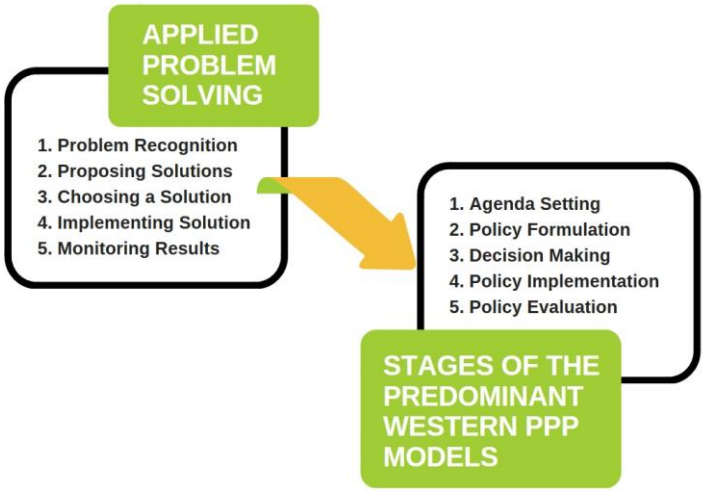


**Figure 2: Policy cycle emerges from the problem-solving approach**
(adapted from Howlett et al. 2009)

For the sake of ease during the rest of this thesis, the author will use Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl's (2009) wording to label the Western PPP stages to maintain consistency, but this five step model is used with little variation in the majority of Western PPP literature. This model will be known as the Western PPP cycle throughout this thesis. The five stages of the predominant Western PPP model shown above are worth briefly considering, to demonstrate later how they vary from the UAE PPP model.

#### 3.1.1.1 Stage 1: Agenda setting

Agenda setting is a critical stage in the policy cycle, affecting every aspect and its outcomes. Here are where problems which catch governmental attention come into focus. Many acknowledge the importance of this stage; Cobb and Elder (1972) for instance define the agenda stage as prerequisite for decisions, determining issues and choices within a complex social matrix, including governmental input such as the available documentation, laws, decisions etc. Cobb and Ross (1972) also identify four major phases of the agenda-setting stage, i.e. *initiating* the issues, *specifying* solutions, *expanding* and requesting supportive resources and finally *entering* the issue in the institutional agenda. Bovens, T'Hart, and Peter (2001) argue that it is value to look back at previous examples during this stage to understand potential scope of policies.

#### 3.1.1.2 Stage 2: Policy formulation

The formulation stage of the policy cycle occurs when the actors involved identifies and assesses the feasibility of different solutions and explores the solution options. Most of the options follow the essential components of the formulation stage, risk assessment and policy analysis. Furthermore, Knoepfel and Weider (2007) see the formulation stage as policy programming, since it encompasses precise objective definitions and includes the operational use of instruments. In the policy process, the policy formulation stage also involves political and administrative parties with clearly identified roles and authority. Moreover, it contains rules as procedural elements, to be used in the implementation phase.

The formulation stage is divided into four phases: *appraisal, dialogue, formulation and consolidation* (Thomas 2001). In appraisal, the government focuses on gathering evidence from such inputs as public consultation, stakeholders and documentation analysis, to identify and consider the problem. Then, the dialogue phase encourages communication between policy actors' perspectives, about the issues, the problem and the possible solutions. Structured meetings, the organised engagement of all participants, are helpful, adding new enthusiasm to policy-making (Hajer 2005). During formulation, the core phase of policy deliberation, gives formulated feedback on the proposed option to ensure ratification in the next stage. The final phase consolidation considers actors' formal feedback on the policy options. This may bring

consensus, which allows a solution to be developed; but if the actors find it unacceptable, then it will not be ratified in implementation (Carlsson 2000). In summary, Thomas' (2001) model matches well to some of the overall stages of the UAE PPP cycle, as discussed later in this thesis.

New actors mostly propose changes in policy goals and programmes, while current actors tend to change instruments and components, which bear the most frequent change (Chari and McMahon 2003; Berridge 2005), because policy regimes, paradigms and subsystems in policy-making tend to use similar forms and patterns. Accordingly, policy subsystems constantly influence policy solutions in the formulation stage. Sabatier (1988) argues that actors' interaction helps to analyse policy change, by mediating cohesiveness, associations between ideas and the interests of actors, sometimes producing innovative solutions (Bressers and O'Toole 1998; Jordana and Sancho 2005). Consequently, policy subsystems change in policy subsystem structures because of the varied involvement of actors in policy solutions. Thus, new actors' ideas encounter policy deliberation (Howlett et al. 2009; Schmidt 2001).

At this stage, Hill (2013) has suggested that policy-makers should explore choosing instruments according to the problem and the context. Governments benefit from using a wide range of many instruments and tools to facilitate implementation (Gunningham et al. 1998). Classifying and categorising these instruments are limited only by policy-makers' imaginations (Salamon 2001). Policy makers are then involved in matching tools to defined problems and

proposed solutions, ultimately influenced by their experience and preferences (Howlett et al. 2009).

#### 3.1.1.3 Stage 3: Public policy decision-making

The decision stage for public policy shares no boundaries with other stages, but is apparent at all stages of the process. Brewer and Deleon (1983) define this stage as that of decision-making between solution options. Furthermore, at this stage decision-making can yield different kinds of decision, such as *negative* (to take no action), or *positive* (to resolve problems, changing the status quo). Hence, decisions are understandably not simple technical exercises but entire political processes (Howlett et al. 2009). Notwithstanding the limited rights of actors to make decisions, their engagement in policy-making still encourages some solutions and discards others (Woll 2007).

#### 3.1.1.4 Stage 4: Policy implementation

In the implementation stage, decisions and actions turn into practice, delivering policy outcomes. Resources such as funds and personnel deliver policy results. In addition, rules and procedures are developed to control the delivery of such results. In general, deploying the expertise of non-government parties and non-state actors ensures diversity and extends the public and private interface for service delivery. Moreover, public hearings in the implementation stage increase compliance with regulations or policies (Talbert et al. 1995). In fact, public policy is not simply a matter of implementing a

programme or solving a single problem; it encompasses multiple problems which have different causes and issues in the control of different independent parties, which require not single decision but a series of related decisions in order to be executed (Rittel and Webber 1973; Howlett et al. 2009). In addition, policy implementation may be influenced when it is targeted at people's discretionary behaviour, especially when it touches deep-rooted attitudes such as religious policy or road safety policy (Okoth 2015). All these inputs inevitably make implementation complex and could result in a failure to deliver policy outcomes or outputs such as reducing the level of domestic violence or eliminating pollution (Schneider and Ingram 1990, 1993).

#### 3.1.1.5 Stage 5: Policy evaluation

During and after policies have been implemented, they can be evaluated. According to Howlett, Ramesh, and Perl (2009), evidence-based policy making has a role in the policy learning process through policy evaluation. Further, policy evaluation has been used increasingly in recent years as practitioners attempt to enhance the rationality of policy deliberations and to achieve improved policy learning as part of their governance. Evidence-based policy making represents an effort to restructure policy processes through prioritising data-based evidentiary decision-making, as opposed to experiential policy assessments, with the aim of minimising the failures that result from differences between government expectations and the actual conditions on the ground

(Pawson 2002, 2006). Additionally, a significant consideration in policy evaluation is the assessment: policy evaluations are complicated by the difficulties in assessing the successes and failures of policy initiatives, which reinforces the need for policy evaluations and learning (Sanderson 2006). With these policy stages in mind, it is worth turning to the study of the PPP cycle and the ways that public administration affects policy development.

### 3.1.2 Policy Process Research

Policy process research studies the interaction between different policy-makers and stakeholders within specified times, events, and contexts to provide outcomes. Policy process research is defined as social science research, but its characteristics differ slightly from other kinds of research. As Bulmer and Warwick (1993b) note, policy experiments are unusual, because their set-up varies according to the political environment and social context, thus, drawing lessons is difficult, given the consciously limited scope for generalisation. Most policy process research takes the form of case studies, using qualitative methods such as observation to study the impact of the phenomena on deduction, or adding stages to the policy process. Generally, policy process research has implications resulting from continued interaction and the overlapping practice of multiple theories, inputs and outputs (Sabatier and Weible 2014).

Different policy methods, approaches and methodology lead to better differentiation between the terms policy analysis and policy study. Policy

analysis concentrates on policy output and outcome impacts, evaluating quantitatively by cost and benefit analysis. For example, it is intended to measure direct and indirect social impact and understand the relationship between the outputs of government policies. It does not focus on process as generating outcomes (Lynn 1999; Weimer and Vining 2010), whereas policy study focuses not only on policy programmes or effects, but also on the presumptions and causes behind the adoption process (Steinberger 1980).

This thesis falls into the category of policy study. Policy study indicates the influence of political systems on policy content, forms and associated decisions and illustrates the policy determinants that identify the causality factors or variables in policy-making (Hancock 1983). It also demonstrates policy content pointing to the shape of the process since it is very closely associated with policy problems and agreed solutions such as regulations. It illustrates how 'policy may determine politics' and shapes the different types of policy-making processes (Howlett et al. 2009).

Eventually, analysts evaluate policy outcomes by collecting data and gathering information in two ways: adopting the frameworks deployed in policy-making (Yanow 1992); and logically analysing policy objectives and outcomes to explore sociological methodology. The analytical option adopts the positivist view (Lynn 1999; Radin 2000), understanding why intended policy fails to be implemented as planned or why another policy succeeds despite poor implementation (Bovens et al. 1995, 2001; Bovens and T'Hart, 1998). Other

analysts take the post-positivist approach of interpretivism, studying the influence of human behaviours on confident methods of policy implementation. This perceptibly enhances the understanding of the effect of social phenomena on policy-making gained during outcome analysis (Torgerson 1996; Yanow 1999; Thompson 2001; Dryzek 2005).

Ultimately, policy studies are markedly impacted by the power of those involved in, or influenced by, policy processes. In fact, most policy analysts repeatedly mention the impact of politicians in generating winners and losers. Knoepfel and his colleagues (2007) use the “triangle of policy actors” to understand this impact with reference to a “beneficiary group” and “target groups”, together with the “political administrative authority” who responds to develop and implement the policy (Knoepfel et al. 2007). This model is highly complex, since many positively and negatively-affected third parties have different interests within the spectrum of winners and losers. The evidence of third parties might not perhaps be considered important for planning policy development, but politicians often involve them early to ensure their acceptance. In addition, a broad range of indirect winners and losers results from cost benefit analysis, such as hidden costs representing the collective indirect costs of satisfying different party interests in developing public policy.

### 3.2 Public Policy and Politics

Political systems such as federal and unitary systems are influenced by the capacity to make and implement policy. Unitary political systems with clear

structured relationship and hierarchical command chains between government levels and subordinates, have thereby reduced the complexity of policy-making (Fabbrini and Sicurelli 2008). However, federal systems need agreement between intergovernmental parties and it is hard, time-consuming, and mostly frustrating to try to make policy consistent. Furthermore, two-level governments are usually subject to judicial change, subjecting national policy to change restrictions (McRoberts 1993; Grande 1996).

Obviously, enforcing policy implementation, derived from decision-making, requires the support of regulations, legislation, and instruction to ensure policy compliance. In addition, these organising principles support better collaboration and enhance the relationship between target groups and public administration (Klijn 2001; Philips and Levasseur 2004). To use regulation means adopting a “command and control” concept: commands being authorised by government decisions and control for compliance and evaluation by administrative agencies (Baldwin and Cave 1999).

Many early studies (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; see also Lipsky 1971; Murphy 1973; Pressman and Wildavsky 1973; Jones 1975; Van Meter and Van Horn 1975; Berman and McLaughlin 1976; Bardach 1977; Elmore 1978) claimed that because officials, who know the intention behind policies, are the best people for implementing policy, the approach should be “top-down.” In contrast, a ‘second generation’ of policy implementation theories evolved in the early 1980s to focus on analysing policy issues, which called for

'bottom-up' approaches (Barrett 2004). Proponents of the "bottom-up" approach (Hjern et al. 1978; Hjern and Porter 1981; Ackermann and Steinmann 1982; Davies and Mason 1982; Wittrock et al. 1982; Hjern and Hull 1985) claimed that the others were behaving like "street level bureaucrats" who attain, examine, and sustain actions to deliver and enforce effective policy implementation (Lipsky 1980; Sabatier 1986). Nevertheless, these two dichotomous approaches provided valuable insight into policy implementation in the early 1990s, when there was a need to improve the debate between them.

Accordingly, a third approach emerged, which resulted in focusing on administrative behaviour models such as "game theory" and "principle agent" (Hawkins and Thomas 1989; Scholz 1991). These approaches focused far more on policy design, unlike the models before, which focused only on administrative concerns about implementation programmes (Mayntz 1983; Bobrow 2006).

Moreover, Hay (2002) recommends that political systems should be incorporated with social elements, since any event, policy, process and practice of current government will not be recognised separately from the current social context in which it occurs or is entitled to "political analysis". Many academic studies explore policy-making for political science purposes; that research focuses not on the output of policies but on Lasswell's concern (1956) with "who gets what, when and how" (Hill 2013: 8). Government is no longer seen as a political system only but also as defining culture and law. Hays argued also that political analysis should acknowledge the influence of "extra-political variables" –

economic or historical – and their contribution to policy-making (Hay 2002: 3).

Ultimately, policy actors – elected politicians, public, officials, political parties, interest or pressure groups, think tanks and research organisations, academic policy experts, consultants and the mass media – are influenced by the current political system (Birkland 2015). They are considered policy actors with roles in policy-making. International institutions or unions also have recognisable roles. The key actors' roles, interaction, power and involvement must be identified, for they to influence the process and output (Timmermans and Bleiklie 1999). Accordingly, such identification has become the basis of subsystems, which integrate ideas, actors and institutions for delivering public policy outcomes (McCool 1989). This also supports the use of the paradigm concept through initiating workable ideas that enhance policy debates and consultation (Howlett et al. 2009).

### 3.2.1 Interdependencies

Interdependence is a broad term used throughout the social sciences to refer to any mutual reliance between two things - groups, organisations, policies, nations, etc. (Thompson 1967; Wagner and Hollenback 2014). Countries are often interdependent within international relations; the Gulf countries, through the GCC and shared military and economic bodies, experience a variety of interdependencies (al-Khoury and Bal 2007; Al-Yousef 2017). Organisations can be dependent upon each other in both the literal sense of contracts,

collaborations, and shared responsibilities, but also in a more metaphorical sense, by sharing best practices or learning from each other's challenges. Policies too can be directly interdependent when they are designed to require co-implementation with other policies that share stakeholders, or can be more generally interdependent as they both shape the culture that creates them and are written by lawmakers in those cultures.

Policy making is always situated within the context of interdependence (Gilardi 2014: 185), especially in a rapidly-developing country like the UAE. Emirati policies draw heavily from UK best practices, but are also influenced by other Gulf countries and even the US or EU. With the rapid decentralisation of Emirati public administration, more departments are becoming interdependent, and are drafting policy that is cross-referential and itself interdependent on other policy. Even within the PPP cycle, recognising the numerous interdependencies of each policy initiative was a challenge that ultimately proved too great for some policy owners, who had too many stakeholders between both the federal-level and the Emirate-level to create implementable policy. Before the author is able to reflect on the impact of the many levels of interdependencies in her research in her findings in Chapter Seven, it is important to look at the different ways the concept of 'interdependence' can be applied on different by interconnected levels: organisational interdependence and policy interdependence.

#### 3.2.1.1 Interdependence at the Organisational Level

There are a variety of ways that organisations within a larger parent

organisation (such as within a ministry) can be interdependent; many of these offers great opportunity for collaboration, assistance, and learning. One way to view how organisations experience interdependence is to examine the degree to which departments or organisations within that overarching organisation are intertwined and directly dependent on each other's knowledge and resources. Sociologist James Thompson created the foundation framework for discussions of organisational interdependencies by focusing on three types: pooled, sequential, and reciprocal interdependencies (Thompson 1967). Because the structure of sequential interdependencies does not apply to the case example of the UAE, it will not be discussed. However, Thompson's pooled and reciprocal interdependencies are relevant, as are some other perspectives on organisational interdependencies.

Organisations are often interdependent in a very broad sense when they pool their resources. This means that the organisations share one common source of materials (like a shared operating budget or a shared IT department) and there is little competition or direct dependence on each other (Wagner and Hollenback 2014: 178). For example, many Emirate-level departments that report to the MOI share a vision, advisory staff (including the author's Strategy Department), and overarching budget, but are largely independent, leading some policy owners to forget that these departments still had some pooled interdependence and shared stakeholders.

Organisations also experience reciprocal interdependence, where

departments or sub-units are heavily dependent upon each other's work and information (Wagner and Hollenback 2014: 179). This kind of interdependence within organisations is encouraged under NPM principles, as discussed later, where decentralisation encourages specialisation with knowledge-sharing and diffused responsibilities. In many cases during the author's research, reciprocally interdependent departments or committees struggled with developing policy through the PPP cycle because they could not get stakeholders to share information, consult with each other during important steps of the planning process, or acknowledge that certain practices or policies would require shared implementation.

Finally, there are organisations and departments which experience comprehensive interdependence - they are dependent on many other organisations and their input before they are able to take action, and interaction is often direct (Wagner and Hollenback 2014: 179-180). This can be a source of great stress or conflict. Within the MOI of the UAE, the author's Strategy Department was comprehensively interdependent. Whether improving PPP cycle and governance documentation, working with policy owners to develop policy initiatives, or advising MOI PPP deployment based on lessons learned at the ADP, the Strategy Department is wholly interdependent with all other departments it is advising and guiding. All interactions that policy owners have with the Strategy Department, in return, are interdependent interactions with the MOI and top leadership, including HH.

Thus, in this thesis, the author will describe several levels on which organisations were interdependent. For example, delays often occurred when federal-level policy owners were not fully aware of how their proposed policies would require attention from Emirate-level stakeholders; these policy owners did not see how interdependent their department was with those who carry out their policy at the street level. The author discusses interdependencies within the command and control structure of the UAE public administration later in this thesis.

Another means by which to view the interdependence of organisations is to explore the kinds of behaviors and actions which necessitate interdependence. One such viewpoint is to recognise that many organisations are interdependent because they share activities which tie the organisations together. Baldwin and Clark (1999) argue that standardised templates and other documentation that allows for comparable input is a way to improve efficiency and success with organisations that are tied by activity interdependence.

An alternative way in which organisations behave interdependently is through commitment interdependence. This can include the hierarchical commitments that cause groups to be interdependent - the Strategy Department, for example, could only learn more about the usefulness of its PPP cycle by observing policy owners go through the process, but the Strategy Department was also obligated to assist these policy owners through this process as per their role assigned by HH. Commitment interdependence can

also manifest itself directly through contracts and other forms of more formal commitment, both within the larger organisation and externally with outsourced consultants. According to many scholars (Scherr 1993; Slywotzky 1999; Worren 2012), governance frameworks (GFs) with strong role definition and the listing of specific interdependencies is the best way to manage commitment interdependence within public administrations.

Perhaps most relevant for this thesis, governance interdependencies shape many of the interactions between public servants and departments or committees at large. Governance interdependencies organise the authority structure of public administrations, and create the formal flow of information and responsibilities within organisations (Worren 2012). These interdependencies are part of a larger category of social network interdependencies, in which formal and informal ties between individuals and groups among collaborative organisations create interdependencies (Bonacich 1991). This may include sharing of managerial personnelle, cross-departmental friendships and favors, or even shared figureheads (Walker 1996). The social network that develops within larger organisations should be built on trust rather than competition, and these bonds of camaraderie can be experienced at such different levels that Sheppard and Sherman (1998) propose that social network interdependence should be measured by depth of social cohesion.

Organisations, such as the MOI and ADP that are the subject of this research, are inevitably interdependent with other ministries and departments

which also help to provide services to Emirati citizens. However, it is also important to understand how policies can be interdependent, a subject not often enough addressed (Klijn and Koppenjan 2015). Thus, any discussion of interdependence in relation to public administration and policy requires an understanding of "interdependence of economic, social and environmental conditions among countries, and interdependence among policy areas within countries" (UNCTAD 2016). Policies may be interdependent by being modeled after policies in other countries; or they may be interdependent with policies elsewhere in the public administration.

#### 3.2.1.2 Policy Interdependence

One way in which policies can be interdependent, in a broad sense, is through policy transfer. Policy transfer is "the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system" (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000:5). Evans discusses ways that policy transfer can be coercive or negotiated (Evans 2008: 8), usually at the international level, but more relevant to this thesis are the ways in which policy transfer can be voluntary - in particular, how the UAE learns from each Emirate and applies the lessons to other Emirates, or even learns from the best practices of other countries.

Another way that policies can be interdependent is through international

influence and policy diffusion. At the federal-level, policy diffusion occurs “when government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior policy choices made in other countries” (Simmons et al. 2006: 787). In the broader sense, policy diffusion is “the process whereby policy choices in one unit are influenced by policy choices in other units” (Maggetti and Gilardi 2013: 3). Policy diffusion is one direction: one organisation adopts the policy choices of another, without providing anything in return (Braun et al. 2007: 49); thus, while the policy might be interdependent, the organisations themselves are not.

Policies may become interdependent as a result of policy convergence. Policy convergence is just the fact that many similar policies at different levels of government tend to converge into one standard (Bennett 1991). This often occurs through emulation, and policies become interdependent because they evolve to rely on the same pools of resources or stakeholders. This convergence can become problematic when it is done blindly without attention to the outcomes upon implementation (Meseguer 2005: 79), sometimes even at the expense of better ideas that might be more fringe and thus potentially upsetting to authority (Maggetti and Gilardi 2013: 4). Policies may also converge more to allow for better competition between sub-organisations; for example, Wasserfallen describes how many Swiss cantons changed their tax policies to be more competitive for federal funding (2014).

Another way that policies can be interdependent is through policy learning, in which policies are continuously updated and informed by the lessons

learned from other policies (Braun et al. 2007: 42). Through policy learning, policies become tied together as change actors tied to both use lessons learned to shape both policies (Bender et al. 2014: 15; Reichardt et al. 2016). Learning from other jurisdictions, particularly in relation to the difficulty or popularity of implementing new policy (Simmons et al. 2008), is a common part of policy interdependence. Understanding how learning happens between interdependent policy makers, like many of the policy owners in the MOI who held multiple leadership positions simultaneously, is a vital challenge for the Strategy Department, which is tasked with learning about how learning happens during the PPP cycle.

Interdependencies appear throughout this research - at the organisational level, at the policy level, and in the many relationships that individual policy makers had within their multiple roles. These interdependencies must be paid attention to, especially in the case of public sector reform, because changing one part of a public administration can have ripple effects elsewhere in the ministries and organisations which make up the state. Keeping abreast of interdependencies can also improve policy development and make the application of the PPP cycle more successful.

### 3.2.2 Public Sector Reform and PPP

Research on PPP has significantly benefited from new institutionalist approaches to PPP, particularly concerning research on public management

reforms (Painter 2003; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2009, 2011). Good governance, according to Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011: 21), “entails the steering of society through networks and partnerships between governments, business corporations and civil society associations” (2011: 21). Consequently, good governance in the public sector is intended to ensure that entities attain their projected outcomes, while acting in the public interest.

For good governance and public management reforms to materialise, policy-making must influence the outcome. As explained in Birkland (2015), the theory and practice of public management reform is increasingly concerned with the central role of citizens in policy making considerations. The intention of such an approach is to develop policies and create services that are tailored to the individual needs of the public and relevant to their circumstances. Consequently, there have been attempts to describe the systematic pursuit of sustained collaboration between different government agencies, individual citizens, communities and non-governmental organisations.

New public management (NPM) theory has been a part of the debates regarding public management reform, and should be considered when discussing public reform and policy development. NPM is a management system that is used by countries, organisations and different agencies; it emphasises the understanding that ideas applicable in the private sector may be successful when used in the public sector as well (Barzelay 2001; Farazmand and Pinkowski 2006). As a result, the NPM approach offers the potential for a

more efficient means of obtaining the same services, or even products (Kaboolian 1998), while still innovating and improving content. But, as a Western theory, NPM was also developed in one context (primarily the OECD); understanding its applicability to countries in the Global South is not as obvious as in other contexts. Therefore, after exploring NPM, including its principles and impacts, this chapter explores how the literature has addressed the notion of NPM in the UAE and the challenges faced when applying Anglosphere economic theories to the Global South.

### 3.3 New Public Management

A major revolution in public administration was the emergence of NPM in the 1980s, when UK scholars like Christopher Hood and others (Dunleavy 1985; Hood 1991; Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Lynn 2006) sought a term to refer to the new mindsets that were reforming administrative management across Europe. The NPM concept borrowed heavily from academic theories, market models, and private sector management principles and practice (Goldfinch 2009; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2009; Birkland 2015). The concept has been applied to a number of OECD cases, with varying success (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Gore 1997; Dollery and Lee 2004; Pollitt and Dan 2011). NPM represents a different mindset toward what public administration does - operate the business of serving the people. But, this thesis demonstrates that injecting this NPM mindset into a command and control, client-patron based society is not an easy process.

According to Islam (2015), the goal of NPM for service delivery is best understood in the context in which it emerged. NPM was influenced by the general perception that bureaucracy and other forms of public administration had failed to achieve organisational goals (Simonet 2014). The failures and inadequacies of public sector performance over time were directly attributed to the bureaucratic model of public administration adopted in most government institutions (Kalimullah et al. 2012; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011). Haque (2004) summarised the reasons for the shift away from the traditional model to NPM as "failures of traditional state bureaucracy, especially in terms of its monopolistic nature, unmanageable size, managerial inefficiency, public inaccessibility, economic inertia, excessive corruption, and self-serving agenda" (2004: 4). Because these failures were attributed to bureaucracy itself, a new mindset was sought that approached management from an new direction.

### 3.3.1 Principles of New Public Management

Though NPM developed out of a variety of needs, there are several recurrent points that are common among theoretical discussions of NPM: first, governments work to reduce the number of staff and increase efficiency; second, governments attempt to restructure the public service by redesigning it to embrace business management principles and methods; and, third, governments strive to transfer resources and services from the public to the private sector (Haque 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Kalimullah et al. 2012; Liddle 2017). Therefore, NPM principles emphasise user responsiveness,

outcome-orientation, and competition in public service delivery, which are all based on the principles of good governance (Haque 2004; Pollitt et al. 2007; Liddle 2017). Most importantly, NPM focuses on an idea of making government more cost-effective, efficient, and financially-transparent.

The NPM has several themes/principles (Goldfinch 2009). NPM is driven by the principle of disaggregation or decentralisation, which reimagines central leadership as a series of interconnected partnerships. Power is distributed to departments, and senior managers have decision making power. This involves a shift away from the centralisation of power found in bureaucratic institutional structures to the creation of interdependent departments such as Human Resources, IT, Procurement, Finance, and Accounting, each with some level of authority to increase the efficiency of the service delivery.

NPM principles are also bound by competition, at various levels. In governments with large amounts of outsourcing (like the UAE), this often involves recognising purchaser-provider separation in the public sector so as to allow for various forms of service provision through competition among service providers (Birkland 2015). This means separating administration from service provision, borrowing from market liberalisation principles to improve the quality of and access to services. This also connects to another central principle of NPM, which is the outsourcing of tasks which can be managed by private sector companies. NPM also heavily favors incentivisation as a way of prioritizing competition. This refers to “shifting away from involving managers and staffs and

rewarding performance in terms of a diffuse public service or professional ethos, and moving instead towards a greater emphasis on pecuniary-based, specific performance incentives" (Goldfinch 2009: 2).

One of the most relevant themes in NPM for this thesis is the importance of developing explicit standards and measures of performance. These standards are conveyed and measured through the use of standardised templates and documents. Accountability and order are increased through standardised documents, as all involved understand their goals, targets, and milestones. Hood (1995) also notes that the use of private sector management tools, including the use of standardised documentation, shared databases, and e-technologies, are often ways that governments can utilise NPM mindsets in physical, pragmatic ways by putting new approaches to collaboration on paper.

Finally, an important aspect of NPM is that it is highly outcome-oriented (Islam 2015). The end goal is serving the client/customer, who, in the case of NPM, is the citizen. In the example of PPP, the end goal is to create policy that can be successfully implemented. Becoming outcome-oriented, however, can be problematic when dealing with outsourced services or external bodies; as described later in this thesis, consultants may move too far to the side of checking boxes and completing lists rather than creatively and collaboratively facing challenges.

Several of these NPM principles, including decentralisation, outsourcing, creating performance standards and documents, and emphasising output

controls, are all relevant to the research presented in this thesis, and are applicable to the UAE case example. The spotty application of NPM principle in the MOI and ADP are further explained in later chapters.

### 3.3.2 NPM Related Models

Many scholars have argued that the concept of NPM has grown out of date, and should be replaced by other models (Kickert 1997; Drechsler 2005; O'Flynn 2007; Christensen and Laegreid 2013; Ronness 2013); though this author has chosen to focus on NPM principles and mindsets, it is still worth briefly examining what can be gained from thinking in alternative ways. Many authors have recommended a move from NPM to New Public Governance (Osborne 2006, 2010; Wiesel and Modell 2014; Dickinson 2016).

In contrast to the old public administration and the NPM model, the New Public Governance model places the citizen at the core of administration. Shared interests of all citizens are preferred over an aggregate of interests as represented by the elected officials or the market forces for decision-making (Wiesel and Modell 2014). Multiple interdependent stakeholders at local, national, and international levels work together using trust, relational capital and contracts to deliver outcomes. This model is not, however, the best fit for this thesis, largely because the author did not find, within her reflections, serious attention paid to the citizen during organisational discussions or PPP development. In other words, New Public Governance's emphasis on the citizen

does not align with the UAE PPP experience.

O'Flynn (2007) and Moore (1995) have both proposed a New Public Values approach which replaces the market outcomes focus of NPM with the public value paradigm. The public value as a construct has been defined as a multidimensional construct that is collectively expressed, politically mediated, and measured through outcomes, as well as, processes based on trust and fairness (O'Flynn 2007). This approach places the public manager at the heart of resources allocation, measurement, and legitimacy. On reflection, the public value approach appears to be very similar to the New Public Service approach discussed next.

Another model is New Public Service which has been described as being the "most coherent" amongst all approaches (Robinson 2015). The core is formed by the citizens, community, and civil society and the role of the government is to ensure that their shared interests are met (Denhardt and Denhardt 2003, 2015). The main elements of NPS are democratic theory, an involved citizenship, bureaucracy working to enable and facilitate citizens in finding solution to societal problems, and a public service ethos guiding the entire approach (Robinson 2015). In fact, Bourgon (2009) has suggested four key elements of NPS as collaborative relationship between government and citizens, shared responsibilities, extensive public discourse and information sharing, and the citizens' involvement in government. In this way, the NPS has steered public administration from a position of control to capacity building and

facilitation.

### 3.3.3 Impact of New Public Management

According to Hill and Lynn (2004), a good public administration model is one that improves organisational structure, public management, and governance practices, and therefore has significant, positive effects on governmental performance. NPM has greatly influenced structural as well as organisational policy reforms in the public sector (Scott et al. 2000; Robinson 2015). According to Pollitt (2002; also Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011), the NPM mindset led to decentralised organisational structures in OECD countries, with putatively flexible and innovative staff, replacing the highly centralised bureaucracies.

It also led to customer focused public administration characterised by a focus on performance as well as on quality improvement, users, and human resource management policies (Gilson et al. 2009). This had involved establishing appropriate policies to guide and ensure: the appointment of hands-on professional managers to public institutions, who have the freedom to use discretionary power; setting measurable performance indicators; allocating resources and linking rewards to performance (Kalimullah et al. 2012); the disintegration of public sector into units with devolved functions and budgets (Lapsley 2009); outsourcing public services to promote competition; allowing the adoption of hybrid service delivery models through direct service delivery and the contracting of services, the adoption of private sector management practices

such as flexible pay, and a focus on the efficient use of resources and lean management (Goldfinch 2009; Robinson 2015). This new paradigm shift in public administration has forced politicians to take a back seat in the routine operations of public institutions, focusing instead on setting broad parameters of policy or strategy and leaving management to the professionals (Goldfinch 2009).

Another important aspect of public service delivery that has been impacted by NPM is individual and organisational knowledge transfer. Learning and innovation were difficult to achieve during the bureaucratic era, since many bureaucratic leaders were not willing to engage in activities that would change their cultural orientation (Vigoda-Gadot et al. 2005). Past knowledge and experience, together with conservative institutional solutions greatly influenced managers' decisions, including those on creativity and learning.

In a study conducted among senior managers in the public service, Fenwick and McMillan (2005) noted that organisations' management modernisation, if it comes as a result of adopting NPM, encourages individual and organisational learning. This can be achieved internally or through partnerships with private organisations. Vigoda-Gadot et al. (2005) also noted that collaboration between public sector and private sector organisations has contributed a great deal to learning because it allows ideas and new work concepts to be shared. Gilson et al. (2009) attributed increased learning in the post-bureaucratic era to the adoption of knowledge management techniques

and modern practices in human resources management.

Despite the praises that NPM in the context of public service delivery has received, its application in OECD countries has also received criticism from several writers (Polidano 1999; Hernes 2005; Lapsley 2009). Lapsley (2009) observed that the adoption of NPM by applying private sector performance criteria to transform the public sector has largely failed. For example, the heavy reliance among government institutions on management consultants to help in the public-sector transformation has always increased the cost of operations. Many authors (Moore 1995; Denhardt and Denhardt 2003, 2015; O'Flynn 2007; Bourgon 2009; Robinson 2015) argue that human resources downsizing to achieve cost reductions and financial efficiency has prevented public sector organisations from having enough experts to carry out major projects. Thus, when Hill (2013) and others (Goldfinch 2009; Islam 2015) argue that NPM has been successfully implemented in many countries, it is important to recognise that even successful implementation can be flawed and cause tension (Hernes 2005, Lapsley 2009), and that NPM adoption cannot be viewed without critique.

### 3.3.4 Applying NPM in the Global South

The literature regarding the application of NPM principles in the Global South is extensive and diverse, though, like this thesis, much of it is predicated on specific case examples of the application of NPM principles. Few of these case examples come from the Middle East. However, it may be different to

generalise from other Middle Eastern examples to understand the UAE, since, according to Polidano, the “outcome of individual NPM initiatives depends on localised contingency factors rather than any general national characteristics” (1999: 1). While the author agrees that this may be the case with larger regional characteristics, the author addresses the relevance of general national identity and its impact on NPM implementation in the UAE in the conclusions of this thesis.

There are many reasons why NPM principles were applied in the West starting in the 1990s, and many of those reasons, such as a desire to increase efficiency and improve service to citizens (Kamarck 2000; da Cunha Rezende 2008; McCourt 2008), are just as applicable to Global South governments. Still, there are notable trends in adoption of NPM principles in the Global South; for example, Kamarck (2000) found across 123 countries that the main reasons for countries to initiate NPM reforms were as responses to economic and/or fiscal crises, democratisation, and in adjustment to external pressures. da Cunha Rezende (2008) found that this adoption was actually more successful in poorer countries, where strong leadership did not have economic complacency to delay governance reform, as opposed to economically secure countries where central authority gained obedience through patronage.

Polidano’s (1999) discussion of the application of NPM principles in developing countries/Global South is predicated on the notion that NPM reform initiatives have been successful in some applications, and highly problematic in

others. Polidano largely attributes this range of success to the incomplete adoption of NPM principles; many other authors commenting on NPM reform in the Global South (Cook and Kirkpatrick 1997; McCourt 1998a; Manning 2001; McCourt 2008; Mansour 2017) offer similar arguments. Polidano's (1999) recommendations - that Global South governments should be more willing to be eclectic and experimental in adapting NPM principles to fit their specific cultural, political, and economic circumstances, resonates with this thesis: the author herself is recommending that some principles of NPM are better suited for policy development in the UAE.

Salem and Jarrar (2012) argue that most of the problems in implementing NPM in the Global South is the fact that many public sectors have not gotten rid of their silo-based cultures, and have instead remained focused on rigid hierarchies. The inability of some governments to embrace the NPM principle of fair competition has also contributed significantly to problems implementing NPM ideals in these Global South countries (Salem and Jarrar 2012). Several other authors (Bohnet et al. 2005; Entwistle and Martin 2005) also address these issues, similarly pointing to cultural mindsets regarding trust, competition, and authority and the impact these ideas have on the spotty application of NPM principles in the Global South.

Still, there are some overarching trends in NPM application across the Global South that are worth exploring, and which will likely have relevance to the UAE case. For example, many Global South countries have reorganised into

UK-style executive agencies, including Jamaica (Brown 1999), Ghana (Dodoo 1997), Singapore (Common 1999), and Tanzania (Mollel 1998); the UAE has embraced a modified version of this idea. It is worth noting that much of this literature hails from the 1990s; this was a period in which studying NPM in the Global South was in vogue, particularly in African countries which were politically stable enough post-decolonisation to undertake massive economic reform.

Embracing NPM principles of privatisation, competition, and decentralisation should reduce corruption, and several countries have tried to utilise these NPM principles in unique ways to address corruption with varying success (Klitgaard 1997). Governments in India and Pakistan (Islam 1993) have attempted to use organisational performance targets to limit corruption with little success. Several other countries, such as Singapore (Pope 1995), Nepal (McCourt 1998b: 20, 24), and Bangladesh (Crook and Manor 1998), have focused their efforts on decentralisation and encouraging meritocratic competition.

There are also a limited number of studies in the Gulf region (Common 2008; al-Shehry et al. 2009; Ali 2010) and Middle East as a whole (El Kassaa 2006; Mofleh et al. 2008; al-Yayha 2009; Khodr 2013). Again, much of the focus is on eGovernment or use of specific NPM tools. The literature reveals a limited number of studies on OL in the deployment of NPM in the UAE, primarily by Ahmed Mansour (2017) and Fadi Salem (Geray and Salem 2012; Salem and

Jarrar 2012; Salem 2016). Further, as far as is known, little research has been done in the UAE context comparings lessons learned at the federal, Emirate, and municipal levels, in no small part because many of the changes to public administration in the UAE occurred only ten years ago.

### 3.3.5 Applying NPM in the UAE

In the last few years, a number of studies have looked at the application of NPM in the UAE. Some of the literature focused on NPM in the UAE is focused on specific tools or technologies and their application at either the federal, Emirate, and municipal level (al-Yahya 2008; al-Yahya and Farah 2009; Geray and Salem 2012; Salem 2014, 2016). Because of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum push to increase eGovernment and digital public services for citizens, a significant portion of the literature regarding NPM deployment has been focused on eGovernment and mobile government services. In some cases, these studies explore the cultural or social impacts of NPM technologies, such as municipal efforts to use NPM technologies to make Dubai a happier city (Salem 2016). Because the Emirates have been on the cutting edge of technology, their application of eGovernment and SMART government services started earlier, proliferated more rapidly, and provided more options than similar cases (Rahman et al. 2015).

Salem and Jarrar (2012) focus on the effects of this rapid application of NPM principles in the UAE, arguing that there have been significant problems

with the mindset adjustments necessary to accept and trust the principles of NPM. They argue that, while the UAE government has become more efficient thanks to NPM principles, there have been challenges in moving from the hierarchical “silos mode” (Salem and Jarrar 2012) that characterised the client-patron nature of Emirati culture to a more competitive model of governing.

Salem and Jarrar (2012) further argue that the decentralisation inherent in this move toward NPM has led to increased complexity and decreased trust - they found that the diffusion of responsibility leads to a diffusion of information and less information sharing, preventing collaboration and ultimately reinforcing the “silos” of knowledge. They recommend building the social trust and sharing knowledge through technology to overcome these challenges in applying the decentralising aspects of NPM. This thesis will demonstrate some of the ways that their concerns about knowledge sharing and government trust are still plaguing the UAE’s NPM deployment.

In the UAE, another author conducting relevant research for this thesis is Ahmed Mansour, professor at United Arab Emirates University, itself a public university worth discussing within the context of NPM in the UAE (Mansour 2017). Arguing that NPM is a theoretical model that is not clearly defined because it is marked by many varied components, most of which were developed in the OECD context and thus requiring translation, Mansour instead adopts his own model of NPM to apply to the Emirati context. He divides the application of NPM principles in the UAE into two categories: macro-level

application of NPM through outsourcing, and micro-level application of NPM through development of free market culture in the public sector (2017).

Mansour (2017) differentiates between macro-level public services provided at the federal level and the micro-level economic freedom within the private sector largely because, he argues, the client-patron nature of the Emirati government necessitates two separate mindsets toward public administration. Macro-level services, such as education and healthcare, are protected from privatisation by governmental paternalism, while many utilities were already privatised and not subject to NPM (Mansour 2017: 121-122).

He argues, however, that NPM implementation has been more successful in the UAE at what he considers the micro-level, as it relates to encouraging an NPM-oriented market culture at the federal level. In this argument, he explores a wide range of NPM principles, from technologies related to eGovernment and TQM to cultural shifts toward decentralisation, providing the most comprehensive commentary on the application of NPM principles in the UAE. Like Salem and Jarrar (2012), Mansour warns that the application of NPM principles in the UAE has been rapid, uneven, and different at the federal/Emirate/municipal levels.

However, Mansour's split between the micro- and macro-levels is not a split between the federal and Emirate, but between privatisation of the entire administration's system and the use of business management tools and ideas in the private sector; as argued earlier in this thesis, Mansour's binary may not be

the most productive for this research. Thus, later chapters will address both Mansour (2017) and Salem and Jarrar (2012; Geray and Salem 2012; Salem 2016) and their discussions of the struggles of NPM implementation in the UAE.

In conclusion, the NPM model has good theoretical support, and has been demonstrated to improve performance in the public service if it is implemented correctly - the questions are whether NPM is often implemented well, and if it has been implemented well in the UAE. The literature suggests that in many cases the implementation has been mixed, leading to minimal improvements; literature about the UAE is the same. Nevertheless, the NPM approach to public administration is of great benefit to OL because it promotes knowledge and information sharing as well as cross-OL, knowledge management, and modern human resources management practices that promote individual and OL. NPM principles of decentralisation can stand as the foundation for successful, collaborative policy development and PPP cycles that produce implementable policies; but they can also stand in the way of trust relationships and cultural norms. Before examining the ways that both NPM and PPP apply in the findings of this thesis, however, it is necessary to discuss a limited number of ideas regarding OL which are of most relevance to author's research at the MOI and the ADP.

# Chapter 4: Relevant Organisational Learning Scholarship

Organisational learning (OL), as the process by which knowledge is created, transferred, and retained within that organisation, has long-term benefits through embracing a knowledge-based culture (Dimovski 1994; Islam and Tariq 2018). It also inspires people to change their behaviour and practice vis-à-vis new knowledge. Most training consists of input, but OL has an output of capturing knowledge and changing behaviour. There are many examples to show that organisations that learn from their experience are more likely than others to succeed (Garvin 1993; King 2001). Having a collaborative OL process based on interpersonal trust and an OL culture is also important for enhancing organisational commitment, productivity, change, employee engagement and the achievement of strategic outcomes (Song et al. 2009). Hence, this research aims to turn the lessons learned from experience in this field into perceptible assets that can be transferred not only within the ADP and MOI, but also to other governmental organisations within and outside of the UAE.

## 4.1 Perspectives on Organisational Learning

Organisational learning is “the process through which organisations change or modify their mental models, rules, processes or knowledge, maintaining or improving their performance” (Chiva et al. 2014: 689). OL goes beyond just change or adaptation by focusing on the transmission of knowledge

(Fiol and Lyles 1985), but while there are some broadly accepted ideas around the notion of OL, there is no clear consensus on a definition, especially considering how often there is a gap between how organisations should learn and how they actually do learn (Crossan et al. 1995; Tsang 1997; Klimecki and Lassleben 1998; Williams 2001). OL includes the processes by which knowledge is generated and transmitted, thus requiring a multidisciplinary approach to the epistemological question of how organisations learn (Dodgson 1993; Easterby-Smith 1997). In order to study OL, Miner and Mezias (1996) describe the importance of systematic, empirical research; in the twenty-plus years since Miner and Mezias (1996) made that theoretical call, a number of dominant perspectives have emerged within the literature on OL.

While there are a variety of different ways to view how learning occurs in organisations, one of the most extreme in terms of its orientation is the individualist perspective, in which organisations are composed of individuals, and it is these individuals, as opposed to any larger collective, which experiences learning. These individuals are “agents” (Argyris and Schön 1978) operating on their own behalf and on behalf of the organisation from within that organisation. As individuals within an organisation work through challenges and learn, they apply those lessons to the organisation through new rules, policies, or practices, thereby contributing to OL (Argyris and Schön 1996: 16; Boh, Slaughter and Espinosa 2007).

Individual learning occurs when the individual directly interacts with other

participants and processes within the organisation to deal with change and solve problems (Wang and Ahmed 2003). This process occurs through a combination of intentional education and experiential learning (Kolb 1984; Senge 1990; Honey and Mumford 1992; Argyris and Schön 1996). Organisations ultimately attain the knowledge objectives through the efforts of their individual members (Kim 1993). In some organisations, learning is advanced and deliberate; it pursues the development of individual capacities that are closely consistent with the primary objectives of the organisation's knowledge cycle (Kim 1993; Argote et al. 2001; Song et al. 2008; Gerpott et al. 2017). Individual learning is then transformed into collective learning through shared education, mentoring, or communities of knowledge (Kim 1993; Hyland and Matlay 1997; Romme and Dillen 1997).

In contrast, rather than individual learning, other OL theorists focus on group learning; in fact, some scholars argue that "too much emphasis is put on studying the learning of individuals instead of concentrating on the learning of organisations" (Lähteenmäki et al. 2001: 113). Group learning as a concept actually derives from multiple ideas. The first is that individual learning morphs into OL when the individual teaches the group: thus, group learning is simple the natural result of the individual sharing learned knowledge (Wilson et al. 2007). Crossan, Lane, and White (1999) argue that part of the difficulty in defining OL is that, if one views learning as a means to an end, there is little clear divide between individual, group, and OL (Crossan et al. 1995, Crossan et al. 1999).

Alternatively, some view group learning as improvements in group behavior and decision making, based on gaining feedback and making changes based on experience and observation (Sole and Edmondson 2002).

Another way of viewing OL is through the mindset of the system. Organisations become conceptualised as “learning systems” (Revans 1982) in which learning is a process which is constructed within the organisation - there are structures built within the organisational set-up which facilitate learning and the sharing of experiences (Crossan et al. 1994; Popper and Lipshitz 2000). Chia (2017) argues that organisations are made up of leaders who may plan for education, but ultimately use “wayfinding” to use learning to solve immediate problems within the system of their organisational needs. The systemic perspective on organisations especially makes sense to those who are familiar with the discourse of computer language, since this literature often draws from the jargon of networks and computer discourse (Wang and Ahmed 2003). This may also include upgrading the technologies, tools, and materials utilised based on feedback and experience; in this sense, the organisation has evolved into a better one through OL (Argote 1993: 28; Dodgson 1993).

Research indicates the importance of having an embedded system by which organisations may learn and a strategy to capture the experience learned by doing, in an effort to use the new knowledge gained in a PPP (Teare and Rayner 2002). OL as conceptualised through systems helps with strategy and the implementation of projects, engaging and energising people, establishing

active and dynamic stability, enhancing an internalised communication structure and collaborative culture to achieve goals and realise outcomes (Teare and Monk 2002). In this sense, OL happens in communities of learning which are oriented as complete, internalised systems of shared pools of knowledge and experience (Brown and Duguid 1991).

Another important perspective for OL, especially within the context of this thesis, is the notion of interorganisational learning - the idea that organisations can learn from each other, especially when cooperating or collaborating (Crossan et al. 1995; Tucker et al. 2007; Fortis et al. 2016). Learning from another organisation or branch of the same organisation has obvious benefits (Aranda et al. 2017), the most obvious is that it can save time, money, and personnelle distress; it should almost be intuitive to know that learning from someone else's mistakes gives one an advantage (Hjalager 1999). The ability for parallel or interdependent organisations to share knowledge and learn from each other is also important to maintaining consistency across large, corporatised governments such as the UAE - interorganisational learning is essential for ensuring that all people living in the Emirates receive the same quality of public service, including policing and security. As was already explained in Chapter Two, at several points in this thesis research, the author was able to reflect on opportunities for organisations to learn from each other, with varying degrees of success.

A common way of discussing organisations is to reflect on the culture that

is created within the organisation, as a way of understanding the values and principles which guide performance and decision-making. For example, recent studies have found that creating an organisational culture which encourages intergenerational learning can foster the mentorships necessary to ensure knowledge transfer (Gerpott et al. 2017). Early studies of organisational culture emphasised the way that organisational culture brought coherence and meaning to shared institutions (Cook and Yanow 1993; Weick 1985), and served as a metaphor for understanding how organisations process information and learning from experience (Drew and Smith 1995). Organisations which develop a culture which supports learning has better organisational performance (Denison 1990; Gordon and DiTomaso 1992; Islam and Tariq 2018).

It is of final note that more recent analyses of OL have emphasised the importance of reflection and political awareness in OL research. Collien notes that “being critical, being reflexive and being political” are all “necessary elements to identify and dismantle the subtle workings of group dominance in organisational learning processes” (2017: 131). As will be discussed later in this thesis, utilising the methodology of insider action research cycles allowed the author to gain the reflexivity necessary to accomplish Collien’s (2017) prescription for critical, reflexive, politically-aware research.

### 4.2 Important Organisational Learning Concepts

Many of the theories and ideas which have served as the foundation of discussions of OL are problematic because organisations themselves are

complex, context-specific, and uniquely defined by the people who compose them. Many OL theories are used in such a way as to reify and anthropomorphise organisations (Weick 1991; Price 1995); others are so functionalist that they fail to allow for change over time. Still other scholars argue that learning is an inherently disorderly process (because, by learning, one gains more knowledge, choice, and thus chaos), and therefore the concept of OL is an oxymoron (Weick and Westley 1999). As the research in this thesis is driven in part by the themes of new public management theory, this the author has drawn her viewpoint on OL from a series of useful theories of OL that will be specifically relevant to the ADP, the MOI, and the UAE public sector more broadly.

### 4.2.1 The Learning Organisation

Connected to the notion of organisational culture is that of the learning organisation. The concept of the learning organisation stems from the systems approach (Senge 1990; Easterby-Smith and Araujo 2001; O'Keefe 2002) to OL, and refers to an organisation that continually improves itself by emphasising and facilitating the learning of its members (Senge 1990). The concept of the learning organisation also draws from a number of academic disciplines, amplifying the already holistic approach of OL (Easterby-Smith 1997; Johnson et al. 2011). Since Senge's (1990) introduction of the idea, the learning organisation has become a prominent perspective in academic literature, but, as

will be discussed later this chapter, the application of the concept in non-Western contexts has been challenging.

The learning organisation requires systemic thinking because the concept relies on shared, bounded beliefs about learning and knowledge within the organisation, and clear limits of how far knowledge has to be shared. This includes the development of mental models, driven by theories and values which provide a framework for corporate culture (Senge 1990; Argyris 1999; Örtenblad and Koris 2014); this may include knowledge passed through learning organisations as “memories” that reinforce norms and values (Easterby-Smith et al. 2000). Learning organisations also required a shared vision; that may be simply to win a market battle or solve any problems which arise, but Senge (1990) suggests longer-term shared visions better promote successful learning and leadership (see also McHugh et al. 1998).

Learning organisations also emphasise both teams learning and individual learning (through personal mastery). Individuals have access to organisationally-run or sponsored continuing education, or are rewarded or sponsored to receive outside certification and continuing education, with the end goal of personal mastery of necessary skills. Rademakers (2014) argues that businesses may even gain advantage by becoming “corporate universities,” where corporate strategy and company culture can be taught directly as frameworks and shared visions. Since much of learning is experiential, promoting personal mastery requires a culture of continued education, which

often means that individual learning develops simultaneously with team learning. Team learning emphasises problem solving capacity through shared knowledge and access to expertise, allowing multiple stakeholders to learn simultaneously (Örtenblad 2013, 2018). Learning organisations facilitate team learning through trust-building (McHugh et al. 1998), vulnerability, or boundary-crossing activities, and there is an emphasis on communication and shared meanings. Learning organisations are also exceptional at knowledge management (Karkoulian et al. 2013; Castaneda et al. 2018; Filstad et al. 2018).

Early on in this research, the author had a desire to view the MOI and ADP as learning organisations, largely because each of these departments is made up of leadership and staff who believe themselves to be a part of an organisation oriented toward learning the best way to lead their people. I wanted to believe I was taking part in collaborative learning organisational research (Sidani and Reese 2018). Yet while systems thinking helps to understand some aspects of specific departments, a systems thinking approach does not facilitate understanding of tensions between the federal-level and Emirate-level PPP efforts. Any efforts to make mental models or shared visions were unsuccessful at the ADP or MOI, and any team learning was specifically oriented toward PPP and not larger leadership skills. Thus, while the author is arguing that OL was observed during the thesis research (and challenges to OL were also reflected upon and will be discussed), she is not arguing that this is a learning organisation.

Still, there are important lessons that can be learned from literature on learning organisations, even if there is now significant criticism of the learning organisation model (Gino and Staats 2015; Ignatius 2016; Pedler and Burgoyne 2017; Vince 2018). Gino and Staats (2015) explain why so few organisations succeed at being learning organisations, stating that “biases cause people to focus too much on success, take action too quickly, try too hard to fit in, and depend too much on experts” (2015: 110). As this thesis will show, it is perhaps most appropriate to say that, despite the best efforts of Emirati leadership, neither the MOI nor the ADP can be said to have a learning organisation culture or to encourage the learning organisation mindset in its employees, for many of the reasons Gino and Staats (2015) cite. Findings in Chapter Seven will further demonstrate the author’s argument against considering either of her organisations to be ‘learning organisations,’ but will also illuminate some of the insights gained from surveying literature relating to learning organisations.

### 4.2.2 Triple-Loop Learning

One approach to conceptualising OL is derived from Argyris and Schön (1978): the notion of multiple loops of learning. They suggested a comparison of single-loop learning and double-loop learning, while many authors (Bateson 1972; Berman 1981; McWhinney 1992; Raelin 2000; Wang and Ahmed 2003; Kwon and Nicholaides 2017) have added a third level, as described below.

Single-loop learning primarily focuses on the operational level, and seeks to solve problems directly by fixing the mistakes themselves. Rules are followed,

and neither overarching strategies nor values or goals are questioned. This includes gaining proficiency through repetitious practicing and implementing various skills that are commonly used (Pfeffer and Sutton 2006). Usually the emphasis is on enhancing the effectiveness of techniques and work instruction, with only minor changes in strategy (Usher and Bryant 1989). Single-loop learning is relatively mundane and stable; it usually does not require significant changes to practices, and even when it does, single-loop learning does not cause changes in the beliefs and mindsets behind significant behavioral changes. In many ways, single-loop learning is like being an inventor: one experiments with ways to solve a particular problem, rather than seeking to understand the underlying science which explains the principles.

Double-loop learning moves past the direct physical or social causes of a mistake or problem, and directs the focus of thinking toward the underlying values or goals. Rather than focusing on what the problem is, members of the organisation study and determine why the problem occurred in the first place. Thus, the second loop of reflection is the one which “connects the detection of error not only to strategies and assumptions of effective performance but [also] to the values and norms that define effective performance” (Argyris and Schön 1996: 23). This may require exploring shared values and addressing problems with group culture or beliefs (Argyris 1982; Islam and Tariq 2018). This may also result in changing organisational goals to better align with realities observed through experience. In this sense, double-loop learning can be very important in

environments or during periods with dramatic change, as larger organisational change may be necessary. The double-loop learning level also offers relevant insight regarding the concept unlearning, or intentionally backtracking on an accepted behavior or belief (Hamel and Prahalad 1994; Fiol and O'Connor 2017; Morais-Storz and Nguyen 2017; Tsang 2017; Becker 2018; Mariano et al. 2018; Reese 2018; Snihur 2018). Double-loop learning can also be seen as beneficial for preventing future problems by addressing the underlying root cause of issues or concerns.

Triple-loop learning is the examination of knowledge on another level, by reflecting on how the organisation learns, as well as on how the researcher learns during research (Wang and Ahmed 2003). Essentially, triple-loop learning is the of "learning how to learn" (Blackler et al. 2001; Dewey 1944). According to Bateson (2002), this third loop of learning focuses on the process of OL itself – which is fundamentally characterised by both imagination and rigor. Imagination helps to motivate individuals to embrace new knowledge bases while rigor keeps them actively engaged in individual learning endeavours such as mentorship. Notably, the above learning calls for applying behavioural and also structural components in the determination of how OL takes place, from the perspective of both the individuals and the organisation itself (Raelin 2000).

Of all the loops, triple-loop learning is the most radical for organisations; it often requires higher level meta-analysis of organisational values, shared vision, or standard operating procedures. Large-scale cultural change within an

organisation may be required to address conclusions drawn from triple-loop learning. In the case of this thesis, triple-loop learning by the Strategy Department of the MOI lead to radical changes in the way that MOI staff study the OL that is occurring at the federal and Emirate-levels.

In summary, the above relates closely to the insight by Senge (1990) regarding the concept of the learning organisation: that it improves the learning process through embracing exhaustive understanding and the modification of mental frameworks. But the triple-loop learning approach more aptly fits the author's organisations. For OL to be sufficiently effective in the MOI, ADP, or other organisations, it is essential for these organisations to incorporate all three loops of learning. Single loop learning flows naturally within the organisation's framework, but the other two calls for particular attention to create the optimal balance between all three (Tomblin 2010).

Throughout this thesis, the author explores how the ADP/MOI increased their OL capacity by applying double-loop learning to inform changes in the decisions taken during the deployment of PPP within the UAE. Double-loop learning is needed to illustrate what employees can engage in and contribute to, by exchanging information and making decisions (Argyris 1974, 1982, 1990; Edmondson and Moingeon 1999). The MOI aims to operationalise the PPP through testing assumptions, validating theories, combining advocacy and indicating conflicts. As a consequence, it creates a less defensive or unilaterally controlled environment, which is not dominated by enforced ideas, but uses free

thinking to increase double loop learning. Employing enhanced double loop learning does not inhibit, but instead motivates interpersonal interaction – allowing control to be shared between the different parties – thus building an attractive learning environment (Edmondson and Moingeon 1999). In contrast, the author herself experienced triple-loop learning, as an adviser learning about how her organisation was learning about the PPP planning and development experience. The ways in which these various learning loops were put into effect and observed during research are discussed further in Chapter Seven.

Each of these important OL concepts - the learning organisation and triple-loop learning - add to an overarching understanding of the theories behind OL. While it is possible to further delve into the specifics of how learning (at the individual or group level) occurs, these issues have little relevance to the author's most relevant findings which discussing OL within the Emirati context. As such, the author instead would like to briefly touch on some of the more relevant evidence-oriented literature regarding OL, all of which argues that cultural context is important for studying OL (Suliman 2007; Akhtar et al. 2011; Sandhu, Jain, and Ahmad 2011). This includes a discussion of studies which have already provided theoretical and empirical insight into OL in the UAE (Suliman 2007; Arif, Egbu, and Toma 2010; Suliman and Obaidli 2011; Alsalalmi et al. 2014).

### 4.3 Organisational Learning in the Global South

Organisational learning as a theory, as it has been discussed so far, is

similar to NPM and PPP models in that it is a Western theoretical concept, derived from the experiences and best practices of Western organisations and systems. Because experiences of OL are so context dependent, expanding the literature review to the Islamic states of the Global South provides slightly more insight into the nature of OL outside of the West.

In the Global South, discussions of OL are often tied to discussions of leadership styles, learning leadership skills, and the ways leaders can shape OL. Nafei et al. (2012) finds that transactional and transformational leadership styles are the most conducive to OL in Saudi Arabia. Alsalalmi et al. (2014) connect notions of transformational leadership to successful OL in Dubai.

Malik and Kotabe (2009) found that organisations in India and Pakistan that developed their own systems of OL, combined with support from government policies which help train and enhance performance, were successful, particularly those in emerging markets. Malik and Danish (2010) found that OL was directly connected to job satisfaction in Pakistan, but not actually to motivation to learn - in other words, Pakistanis only wanted to learn to be better at their jobs, not to enrich themselves. These and other authors suggest government efforts to change the Pakistani culture belief about the importance of education in economic success (Akhtar et al. 2011; Malik and Danish 2010; Malik and Kotabe 2009).

Sandhu, Jain, and Ahmad (2011) found that OL was greatly hindered in Malaysia by an unwillingness to share knowledge, arguing that those they

interviewed saw knowledge as a competitive advantage and that “public sector employees also showed self-serving biases when it came to their willingness to share knowledge compared with their perception of their colleagues’ willingness to share knowledge” (2011: 206). In Chapter 7 of this thesis, the author makes the same argument for the Emirati example. Sandhu, Jain, and Ahmad (2011) also argue that other factors, such as lack of IT and materials, as well as lack of interpersonal skills and time, all factored into the struggles of OL in Malaysia.

OL is important to study within the context of the UAE, Suliman and Obaidli (2011) argue, because there is high staff turnover in both the public and private sectors of the Emirates, meaning that knowledge retention is difficult and requiring management to prioritise the passing of knowledge through enhancing corporate learning culture (see also de Bono et al. 2009). But while there is a pressing need to understand OL and the impact of Emirati organisational culture on public policy development in the UAE, there has been very little research on organisational knowledge or learning within the Emirati context. Suliman (2007) examined links between justice, satisfaction and performance in the UAE Islamic banking sector, finding that Islamic conceptions of justice were the most dominant factor in determining how Emirati employees experienced learning and management (Suliman and Obaidli 2011). Arif, Egbu, and Toma (2010; see also Arif et al. 2009), while focusing on the nature of organisational knowledge in Emirati construction companies, discuss the importance of shared, standardised documentation to allow for more knowledge transfer.

In conclusion, OL, while not the central focus of this thesis, became important as the author began reflecting on the lessons learned from iterative PPP cycles, as well as the possibilities which emerged from studying how the MOI would learn from the experiences of the ADP. In particular, the author was able to use triple-loop learning to examine, as both a researcher and an advising participant, how the organisation experienced learning about learning in a evidence-based, Global South example. This learning would not have been possible, however, without serious reflection, self-analysis, and awareness of positionality. Therefore, before moving to the methods used in this research, it is worth pausing to explore how reflective methods, and insider action research in particular, were developed as theoretical frameworks and qualitative methodologies.

# Chapter 5: Theoretical Foundations for Reflective Methods

The past several chapters have focused on the background necessary to understand the content of this thesis: the characteristics of the UAE and the specifics of this research; the current literature regarding public policy processes and new public management; and the relevant ideas regarding OL. But in order to understand the theoretical mindsets and methods used in this thesis, it is first important to reflect on the nature of insider action research and the reflection and reflexivity that is necessary in order to accomplish successful insider action research within a public policy setting.

## 5.1 Critical Subjectivity and the Social Construction of Knowledge

During this research, the author considered the interplay between her own critical subjectivity and her place as a researcher and co-participant in participatory action research within her own organisation. Central to this issue is the question of how the identity, subjectivity and individuality expressed through the Self are positioned within research that involves collaborative enquiry and seeks to produce actionable knowledge (Berger and Luckman 1967; Reason 1988). While much of this thesis revolves around the inter-relationship between the informants and their impact on ADP/MOI, it is equally critical to focus on the role of the researcher as a semi-participant and organisational insider. Reflective research such as this can only gain accurate information and experience by

participating subjectively in the social reality of the organisation in which the research is based (Reason and Bradbury 2006: 42).

One should not forget that knowledge construction is both a cognitive and a social process (Nagasundaram and Dennis 1993; Dennis et al. 1999). Individuals first conceptualise an idea (a cognitive process) and then choose whether to contribute it (a social process). Ideas that are more novel and paradigm modifying are more likely to generate improved guidelines and techniques which are likely to produce even more novel and paradigm-modifying ideas (Satzinger et al. 1999).

Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen (2008) ask *"*could all that we construct as "problems" not be reconstructed as "opportunities?" By the same token, as we speak together, we could also bring new worlds into being." The Gergens' position that humans tend to place the individual at the center of knowledge, and thus constructs his experience with that knowledge (Gergen and Gergen 2008; Gergen 2009). They counter that for discursive practices to occur, we are dependent upon others and that consequently social relationships and their multiple formats of communication and inter-relational perspectives are central to the development of human knowledge. The Gergens' positions on the relevance of the Self within social constructionism are often criticised because they afford little relevance to its importance in social constructionist inquiry. The Gergens see Self what we call the self as inherently part of social process.

A major part of the early process is the matter of dealing with Habermas's

theorising of the boundary-crises that arises between the participants, the researcher and co-researchers and the spatial narratives that the researcher creates in order to optimise the knowledge construction. Spatial narratives (Bodenhamer et al. 2015) in this context should be considered as the interplay between the physical, virtual and cognitive spaces in which the group is required to work, each of which determines the levels of engagement and creativity that arises from the group. (Woodgate 2018). These levels of engagement and creativity help determine each participant's sense of accountability and desire to contribute to the public good. Intimacy and immersion into the scope of enquiry tends to increase with familiarity (Wicks et al. 2009).

This concept of spatial narratives potentially subordinates the simple structures of communicative space, which is frequently viewed from first person, second person and third person perspectives. Reason (Reason and Torbert 2001; Reason and Bradbury 2006) suggested that one should consider three broad pathways for participatory action research practice: namely, first-person in personal reflective practice, second-person in relation to a face-to- face community, and third-person where the community of practice is too wide for face-to-face communication and one is seeking to contribute to the development of a social change (see also Chandler and Torbert 2003; Gustavsen 2003, 2015).

Collaborative enquiry creates the opportunity to be part of a collective contribution to social change, on the other it needs to ensure that each

participant and researcher feels a degree of personal satisfaction and freedom in his/her scope, value exchange and intellectual contribution. Gustavsen (2006) argues that knowledge is transferred when people begin to reference ideas that they learned from the work context of others.

The process of understanding and placing the Self within the framework of critical subjectivity first begins with reflection: reflection on one's role within collaborative inquiry, one's place as a contributor to the social construction of knowledge, and one's position as researcher/semi-participant within one's own organisation. Reflexivity, as an avenue to critical subjectivity offers the researcher the space to examine herself from the first-person internal perspective, as well as the second-person, organisational perspective.

### 5.2 Reflecting in and on Organisational Research

John Dewey's early definition of reflective thought remains the standard for all reviews of reflective practice, as he argues that reflective thought is the "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey 1933: 118). Dewey creates a list of phases (1933: 199-209) that the mind uses in contemplation, which range from choosing an option to reflect on through developing a hypothesis and testing it through mental action. Dewey's work would be built upon by numerous authors, though perhaps most notably by Schön and Freire as action research and participatory

action research (PAR) (Freire 1970, 1973; Argyris and Schön 1974; Schön 1983) and Mezirow as reflexivity (Mezirow 1978, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000). Each will be discussed in turn throughout this thesis, as these foundational ideas continue to form the basis for more recent explorations of reflexivity, particularly the work of Coghlan and others (Coghlan and Casey 2001; Coghlan 2002, 2003; Coghlan and Coghlan 2003; Coghlan and Brannick 2015), which illuminates potential pitfalls in organisational participatory action research.

Reflection operates on a common sense level: after completing some amount of research, one takes a period to think back on what has happened during that research, in order to record and retain impressions, gain new insight into what has occurred, and inform new ideas for what actions to take next. In the case of this research, this reflection occurred daily through the use of journaling and reflective memos.

Reflection and reflexivity are subjective methodologies which focus on drawing impressions, emotional connections, and relations/interactions. One approach to reflection which focuses on the emotional aspect of these impressions can be found in the work of Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985). They present a different notion of reflection, defining it as “an important human activity in which people recapture their experience, think about it, mull it over and evaluate it. It is this working with experience that is important in learning” (1985: 19). Boud et al argue for an emotion-centric approach to reflection which utilises three practices.

- Returning to the experience by reflecting in one's mind, recalling important feelings, observations, and actions
- Interacting with feelings associated with the experience being reflected upon
- Evaluating the experience in relation to new knowledge and integrating the experience into one's understanding of reality

These characteristics of reflective thought, they argue, are continuous (see also Burke 2004) and interchangeable, allowing for adaptive reflection. The two-year scope of this thesis research project necessitates a view of reflection that is adaptive and self-aware to ensure effective participatory action research. Reflection should be understood as a continuous process, or a state of mind (Brock and McGee 2002; McGee 2002; Sandywell et al. 2014), rather than as a singular event. This continuous awareness of one's actions, as well as one's power dynamic and position relative to participants and informants is necessary to produce honest and transparent work (Finlay 2002; Finlay and Gough 2003; Berger 2015).

Rolfe et al. (2001) propose a view of reflection as a continuous process of questioning. Their reflective framework is centered around the idea of asking:

- *What?* - an examination of the content or events occurring
- *So what?* - an exploration of direct and potential implications of events
- *Now what?* - an analysis of potential solutions or responses

Rolfe et al.'s framework (2001) is particularly relevant because it encapsulates the advisory nature that PAR and reflective research generally can take. In this thesis, the role of researcher as advisor to ADP and MOI

necessitated a relationship between observation, reflection, and actual participation in these organisations; this role will be discussed further below. It is also important to recognise that individuals experience change over time, as will the researcher, so it is important to reflect on personal change and how that may affect research as well (Etherington 2004).

Jack Mezirow's work (1978, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000), beginning in the 1970s and evolving to the present, trisected reflection into three forms:

- **Content reflection:** focusing on the basic data of what has occurred in the event being reflected upon
- **Process reflection:** focusing on the strategies, actions, and procedures which have occurred as part of the event being reflected upon
- **Premise reflection:** focusing on the underlying assumptions, context, and social situation surrounding the event being reflected upon

Mezirow's view is most relevant because it forces the researcher to separate and distinctly contemplate different facets of reflection, each of which produces different data sets when applied to organisations in which the researcher is also an active participant or, as is the case here, an adviser. Moving beyond a focus on content to reflections on the processes and premises used within organisations can provide insight into the means by which organisations operationalise learning, how they introduce and cope with change, and how the structure organisational culture (Coghlan and Brannick 2015).

Management analyst Donald Schön's 1983 book *The Reflective Practitioner* introduced two types of reflection that are valuable to professionals,

but also have value for researchers in public policy contexts: *reflection-on-action* and *reflection-in-action.* Both reflecting on one's experiences in the moment and adjusting accordingly, and reflecting on those same experiences later, when they can be better analysed, allows the professional to mine that experience for all its value.

Several authors (Killion and Todnem 1991; Burke 2004; York-Barr et al. 2006; Hendricks 2009) also take Schön's thesis (1983, 1987, 1991) a step further, arguing that there is a value in reflecting on one's process of reflection, a concept known as *reflection-for-action*. This makes the action of reflection one of the actions being analysed, in what Hope Hartman calls "metacognitive teaching" (Hartman 2001). This idea relates directly to Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) discussion of the meta-learning, which differentiates between the core action research cycle and the doctoral meta-level thesis action research cycle, both of which are discussed later in this chapter. In that any thesis requires reflection on the process of reflective practice, these philosophical and methodological debates have merit.

Other discussions of reflective practice point to relevant issues, advantages, and concerns. Many authors (York-Barr et al. 2006; Schippers et al. 2012; Thompson and Pascal 2012; Sandywell et al. 2014; Berger 2015; Blair and Deacon 2015) suggest proactive reflective practice, which begins reflection with identification of the actual problem the reflection is seeking to solve; thus the reflection has a clear direction and end goal. For example, York-Barr et al.

(2006) argue that questioning the researcher's actions should be followed by time spent thinking, which they definer as "the active, deliberate, and conscious processing of thoughts for examining goals, beliefs and practices" (2006:10). The emphasis on deliberate examination of goals is an important aspect of participatory action research, as it orients the researcher toward ways to adapt his actions to continue research. Smyth (1992) expresses a similar sentiment in his description of reflection as a period of informing oneself about a situation and then confronting the ideas and reflections gained during that informing period.

York-Barr et al. (2006) argue that reflection requires an actual moment of quiet, contemplative reflection, which they call the pause, time when "presence and openness can emerge" (2006: 9). This reconnects very well with Boud, Keogh and Walker's description of reflection as an opportunity to "mull [the experience] over" (1985: 19) - mulling being a time dedicated to turning over thoughts in one's mind.

Researchers are the starting point for reflective studies since they are inevitably embedded in the intersubjectivity of a socially constructed field. A reflective researcher is seen as an agent who is constructing her/his own social world and is aware of that process. McIntyre argues that "reflexivity provides me with the opportunity to attend to how my personal biography informs my ability to listen, question, synthesise, analyse, and interpret knowledge throughout the PAR process" (2008: 8). In a context such as an organisation, an event, a practice, a process and so on, not only that such a person reflects upon these

enablers by decisions and actions through communication and multiple interaction (Cetina et al. 2011; Fraser 1995). Therefore, all discussion of the action research cycle is necessarily partnered with continued reflection on the role of the researcher in action research, and the role of the author as an academic participant and organisational member engaged in insider action research.

Researching an organisation from within, even when serving in a largely advisory role, requires reflection on the researcher's position and the way researching then affects the researcher's participation as a member of the organisation. Action Research, particularly Participatory Action Research, is a methodology that allows that reflection to be put into action, and then those actions to then direct inquiry. Rather than a passive examination of PPP efficacy, this study will engage in the reflective and adaptive cycles of investigation that are at the heart of Action Research, particularly PAR as it applies to an organisational setting.

### 5.3 Action Research and PAR

Action research traces its roots to the 1940s and Kurt Lewin, and it is there that the development of Participatory Action Research begins. Lewin (1946) argued for research to have meaning by directly impacting the research population or organisation, and then learning from that impact, creating a feedback loop of research and action. In introducing the idea, Lewin wrote,

> The research needed for social practice can best be characterised as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research, a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, and research leading to social action. (1946: 35)

Lewin further argues that there is little point in researching if the results will not lead to tangible recommendations or actions that have real world effects. Research alone is irrelevant without being encased in real action. Research informs action, action informs research in a continuous feedback loop.

Action research can be viewed from the broadly philosophical perspective and applied in many disciplines, and in that sense, “action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview” (Reason and Bradbury 2006: 1). Action research can therefore be reflexive, collaborative and interventionist in political or social affairs (Riordan, 1995).

When working within one’s own organisation, as the author is doing, it is recommended to utilise Shani and Pasmore’s complete theory of the action research, which focuses on four core values: maintaining awareness of the contextual factors which shape research; maintaining high quality relationships with participants; ensuring high quality of the content of research; and monitoring outcomes of both the action studied and the reflections on the action research process itself (Shani and Pasmore 2010: 253).

There are several different models of how to construct the feedback loops

and cycles which constitute action research, and each of which offers its own advantages in various applications. Carr and Kemmis (1986) describe action research as a spiral, since research is always progressing onward and never returning to an original location. Kolb (1984) argues that action research is more of a learning cycle than actual action; thus, it should be viewed in terms of thinking rather than doing. Generally, most authors use some variant of the broad framework of construct-plan-act-evaluate. This thesis will utilise this model as used by Coghlan (Coghlan and Brannick 2015). Throughout his work, Coghlan has consistently utilised a four part model of construction, planning, taking action, and evaluating.

- **Construction:** researcher collaborates with participants in research to determine basic goals and methods for that stage of the research project. For change-oriented insider action research, this includes determining how change will be enacted within a functioning organisation.
- **Planning:** researcher develops method of conducting project, including planning for the development of subsequent cycles of action research based off findings.
- **Taking action:** study is conducted. Data, including reflections, is generated and recorded.
- **Evaluating:** researcher analyses data gathered through action research. Researcher also analyses efficacy of action research through reflection on the research (meta-analysis). Researcher determines best ways to adapt action research based on data gathered, and then returns to beginning of cycle.

Still, all of these stages are fluid and flexible, depending on research needs. Thus, begins a cycle of observation, learning, adaptation, and improvement. Action research exemplifies the idea of learning from experience - at each stage

of implementation and research, evaluation is used to modify practice and improve outcomes. In the case of this thesis, research was conducted over two years of continuous adaptation and advising. It is this adaptability and general focus on experience that makes the Action Research cycle as envisioned by Lewin so powerful in so many contexts. In the decades since Lewin's work, numerous authors have explored the best ways to conduct action research; this thesis will draw heavily from scholars such as Coghlan (Coghlan and Casey 2001; Coghlan 2002, 2003; Coghlan and Coghlan 2003; Coghlan and Brannick 2015), Reason (Reason and Torbert 2001; Reason 2006; Reason and Bradbury 2006), and Pasmore (Shani and Pasmore 2010) in constructing a successful insider action research project.

Insider action research is a particular flavor of Participation Action Research (PAR). It is important to note that PAR has its origins in the Global South (Freire 1970; Selenger 1997; Stringer 1999; Kemmis and McTaggart, 2005; Fals-Borda 2006; Brydon-Miller and Maguire 2009), unlike NPM or other theories discussed in this thesis. Starting in the 1960s, several social movements that affected public conceptions of knowledge and authority changed the way that researchers conceptualised action theory. In Latin America, Participatory Action Research, liberation theory, Marxism, and the indigenous rights struggle mixed in theory and in practice for many years (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005). In the United States, Civil Rights movement changed the conception of voice, encouraging a new way of thinking where all

voices mattered, and research and analysis should not only record the voices of others, but also allow those subjects to direct research (Horton and Freire 1990). In India, researchers at several schools were looking for a way to incorporate collaborative effort with subjects into lived research (Brydon-Miller and Maguire 2009).

Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1970) offered a more critical pedagogical approach that would come to define Participatory Action Research: the notion of the “pedagogy of the oppressed,” which, more than anything, was a proposal for a new relationship between the teacher and the student, in which each instruct the other and research is viewed as a cooperative endeavour. Participatory Action Research as a method of research continued to develop in the Global South after a seminal conference specifically focused on PAR was organised by Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals-Borda in Cartegena in 1977. Fals-Borda’s calls for community action as part of Participatory Action Research would challenge the boundaries between traditional research methods and activism in exciting, if at times radical, ways (Fals-Borda 2006). Some felt the focus on social, economic, and political injustice weakened the rigour of the research (Selenger 1997; Stringer 1999: 9); others note that perspectives on the role of participants and co-researchers were changing in numerous disciplines globally and the addition of collaboration was inevitable (Kemmis and McTaggart 2005; Fals-Borda 2006; Swantz 2006).

PAR is attentive to power relationships, ensuring that power is equally

shared between the researcher and the researched, i.e. the participants. This allows not only learning through research, but also learning through participation. While PAR has evolved out of action research to offer a way to work within organisations to improve conditions for participants, the practice of insider action research has emerged as an optimal research method for participants in corporate or governmental organisations (Coghlan et al. 2004; Coghlan and Holian 2007). This method, which utilises the pre-existing ties held by researchers who are long-standing members of the organisations they are studying, depends on participation by individuals who intend to stay within their organisations, and are studying change to be a part of the change in those organisations (Coghlan and Brannick, 2015). Insider action research offers a unique perspective on organisations and systems because of the insider's permanence within the research setting.

### 5.4 Insider Action Research

Coghlan (2007) emphasises that insider action research, the kind of PAR in which the researcher is already a long-standing member of the organisation being studied, has its unique advantages when studying one's own organisation. This thesis utilises Insider Action Research. Coghlan argues that the advantages of insider action research are many:

> The researchers are already immersed in the organisation and have built up knowledge of the organisation from being an actor in the processes being studied. This knowledge comes from the actor engaging in the experiential learning cycles of experiencing, reflecting, conceptualising and experimenting in real life situations.

(2007: 336)

Insider action research is an opportunity for researchers within organisations, who have built up stores of knowledge and familiarity, to conduct the study necessary to improve organisational operation and, in the case of this thesis, PPP planning. Insiders have the express advantage of having actually experienced the operations of organisations in real-life settings, especially during stressful or crisis conditions that cannot be ethically replicated but are impactful in an organisation's growth. Insider action research is a variant of PAR focused less on societal growth and more on organisational growth and change, and thus is ideal for this thesis research.

Reason and Torbert (2001) argue that all insider action research is conducted and shared through three simultaneously practiced levels of research.

- **First person inquiry-practice:** individualised research conducted by the researcher herself directly. This is often generated through autobiographical writings including the reflective memos used in this thesis project.
- **Second person inquiry-practice:** researchers collaborate with other participants, including all organisational members who work with the researcher within the organisation. These participants are stakeholders both in the change being studied through insider action research and the process of reflective research itself.
- **Third person inquiry-practice:** knowledge gained through the insider action research is shared with impersonal audiences outside of the organisation. This is automatically accomplished by academic insider action research when work is published or submitted in fulfillment of degree requirements.

Insider action research comes with its own challenges, one of which is ensuring that the quality of the data generated is consistent. This concern exists precisely because participants in organisations can be blinded by their own participation, their obligations to the organisation, or simply having too much of an emic perspective (Coghlan and Brannick 2015).

As discussed earlier, Shani and Pasmore have produced meaningful research on ways to ensure high quality insider action research (Shani and Pasmore 2010: 253). They argue that it is important to remember that research is being put into action; the researcher is not studying the action, she is participating in that action. They also emphasise the scientific, methodical, iterative nature of insider action research, discussing its potential for solving problems and fostering growth (Shani and Pasmore, 2010). They argue that quality insider action research is dependent on creating a methodical, step-by-step process of working through the insider action research cycle, and then following that plan through each cycle of collaboration, research, evaluation, and re-planning (Shani and Pasmore 2010: 253-254). Eden and Huxham (2006) also argue that maintaining a steady system of evaluation and adaptation of practice is necessary to ensure consistent and high quality insider action research.

Reason (2006) reminds the insider action researcher that there are advantages, although also dangers, to the fact that the action researcher inside an organisation is present for events as they occur, and is able to concurrently

reflect on changes occurring as both a member of the organisation and as an external researcher observing them. The author, for example, was simultaneously studying the development of PPP within her organisation while also advising on that implementation process. Reason (2006) suggests that focusing on the collaborative, reflexive, theoretical, and sustainable aspects of decisions and procedures may allow the researcher to ensure that reflection on those events maintain the rigour and quality necessary.

Action researchers are, at their core, agents of change (Evered and Louis 1981; Coghlan and Brannick 2015:119-121). They study periods of immense learning, growth, reflection, or change in organisations or groups. But they also participate in enacting that change and, by reflecting, bring insight into the change process. Thus, they often participate in organisational change while also conducting research that will lead to organisational change: this fact itself is a reflection of the dualistic role of the researcher in reflective action research.

### 5.4.1 Role of the Researcher

Coghlan (2007) argues that the researcher must reflect on her role duality: researchers are meant to be impartial, while insiders are most valuable because they are not impartial. Therefore, it is important to reflect briefly on some of the limitations that role duality creates when examining one's own company.

Williander and Styhre (2006) reflect on the role of the insider action

researcher as a dual channel between academia and practice: information flows between the theory of academia and the real-world examples studied in practice. Their roles are two-fold: first, the insider action researcher is a bridge between academia and the organisation, and must translate information and jargon between the two. Second, the researcher is responsible for constructing the case study about the organisation that carry multidisciplinary theoretical merit (Williander and Styhre 2006).

Roth et al. (2004) also argue that insider action researchers operate as a bridge between academic and industry, through shared frames of reference. They emphasise the economic implications of well-executed research, noting that researchers serve as the translators to help industry insiders understand how theoretical study of their organisations can benefit corporate growth and innovation.

One of the most important issues for researchers to consider regarding their role is the power of politics to influence their observations, analysis, and participation. Research is inherently political (Punch 1994), and action research, by examining change, will always include a discussion of power dynamics (Hilsen 2006); Coghlan even argues that action research is inherently subversive (Coghlan and Brannick 2015: 204). This is because of the fact that the inside action researcher is an agent of change, which is, by the nature of change, disruptive and even provocative.

Buchanan and Badham (2008) describe the role of the researcher in

action research as a “political entrepreneur,” engaged in constant negotiations as a researcher, participant, and academic. In the case of the UAE, the specific politics related to the status differences between citizens and expatriates are also relevant; the author’s status as an expatriate is relevant, and will be reflected upon as much as it possible within the context of the politics of the situation.

Buchanan and Boddy (1992) argue that approaching the politics of working within your own organisation requires separating two clear activities: performing and backstaging. Performing involves public action and engagement with change. But, more important for this project, they discuss how backstaging allows the action researcher to operate behind the scenes in a more advisory role, intervening in the organisation through advising, influencing, negotiation, and other behind-the-scenes political roles with less leadership responsibilities (Buchanan and Boddy 1992; Coghlan and Brannick 2015: 205-206).

Several authors (Kakabadse 1991; Bjorkman and Sundgren 2005; Coghlan and Brannick 2015) specifically focus on the challenges of researching peer to peer. This can include peers who do not appreciate being researched (Coghlan and Brannick 2015: 209), or peers who do not appreciate attention being drawn to contentious or “hot” issues (Bjorkman and Sundgren 2005). In some ways, the author was able to avoid these challenges, since many of her peers did not understand the scope of her research; in other cases, as will be described in Chapter Seven, some tensions existed around the author’s dual

role as a researcher and as a member of the Strategic Department.

Being a participant or inside action observer, immersed in policy creation with stakeholders as data was gathered, allowed the researcher to contribute to and conceptualise the development of policy practices, and claim to extract the essence of its organisation and individual learning (Blumer 1969; Glaser 1978; Hall and Callery 2001; Dahlke et al. 2015). This role of the author permitted her to question subjects in contexts of interest and report experiential personal data. Understanding the social construction which resulted from complex interaction with the participants also made the author more aware of reflexivity within the organisation and changes in learning over time that improved PPP development.

This project is not exclusively an example of insider action research being conducted to study the development of PPP in organisations in the UAE; it is also a doctoral research project. The multiple levels of insider participation by the author means that there are also multiple levels of reflection and analysis that must be conducted as meta-learning. This is most easily conceptualised and discussed by borrowing from Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) notion of the core and thesis research cycles.

According to Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002), insider action research projects conducted by academic researchers first consist of the core action research cycle, which is composed of the above-mentioned repeating cycles of constructing, planning, taking action, and evaluating. This serves as much of the content of the analysis, and requires the continuous development of new cycles,

improved by the lessons learned from previous cycles, to put into effect the change being studied in the organisation.

But Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002) then point to a second action research cycle, one which is used by the academic who is themselves engaged in reflection and learning from the process of conducting the core action research cycle. The thesis action research cycle is a process of reflecting on reflection: an action research cycle to study one's action research cycle. This meta-analysis requires the author to reflect on her positionality as a researcher both within the organisations being studied (ADP/MOI) and also as a researcher within her own doctoral project.

Coghlan and Brannick (2015: 40-41) argue that the best means by which to conduct the meta-research which constitutes the thesis action research cycle is to utilise Mezirow's forms of reflection discussed earlier in this chapter: content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection. Focusing on these categories, which Coghlan and Brannick argue form the basis of doctoral insider action research, can not only further supplement the repeating core action research cycles, but can provide insight into the efficacy of the core action research to adequately evaluate the events being studied.

It is also essential to recognise that, while the researcher may reflect on her experience in action while conducting insider action research, the organisation she is in may also be reflecting on actions being taken within the system. As such, these binaries create a set of four possible intersections of

researcher-reflection and organisation-reflection which range on a spectrum of reflection. First, it is possible neither the researcher nor the organisation itself are reflecting on their actions or experiences of change. In most cases, this is a researcher focusing on a specific issue with a highly quantitative perspective (Flyvbjerb et al. 2012).

Second, many studies (Bartunek et al. 2000; Coghlan and Casey 2001; Coghlan et al. 2004; Soh et al. 2011; Hynes et al. 2012; Hockley et al. 2013; Lucas et al. 2013) are oriented such that the organisation or system being studied is in the process of reflecting on action, but the researcher himself is not reflecting on the process of research. As such, research is framed as solving a problem or evaluating a specific program (Coghlan 2003). The system executes a specific change and the organisation examines that process, while the researcher is an observer, with little reflection.

Third, on the opposite side, the researcher reflects on his own research in action, as well as his position within the organisation, but the system itself is not reflecting on its change in action; this is an extremely first-person oriented relationship between researcher and system (Krim 1988; Coghlan 2003; Marshall 2006; Coghlan and Brannick 2015). Meehan and Coghlan (2004) note that this kind of research is common among thesis researchers because those writing a thesis may self-select for a project in which they evaluate their own role within a pre-existing organisation as the main focus of research.

On the far side of the spectrum are research projects in which both the

researcher and the system are reflecting on change, action, and evaluation, both within themselves and between themselves. The organisation is in a phase of self-evaluation or is specifically critiquing the execution of a new policy or action, and the researcher simultaneously studies the action, organisational reflection, and personal positionality during organisational change (Coghlan and Brannick 2015: 176). In many cases, the researcher is part of the organisation's staff that is evaluating the change in action; it is also not unusual for the researcher to work in conjunction with consultants or other external parties to execute organisational and self reflection (deGuerre 2002; Adler et al. 2004; Bartunek 2008).

This taxonomy of researcher-system relationships is particularly relevant for this thesis research because this project very clearly falls in the final category of research, in which the researcher is studying action and change in the MOI and ADP, which are themselves evaluating and reflecting upon action and change within their own policy practices. This triple-loop learning, of reflecting on the process of how an organisation is learning about its own learning, allowed the author both to write this thesis, but also to make better policy recommendations in her role as participant.

### 5.4.2 Limitations and Challenges in One's Own Organisation

Coghlan and Brannick (2015) describe a variety of challenges which can arise while researching from within one's own organisation, and each of these

will be subsequently addressed in more detail and with more specifics to this thesis in either the methodology discussion that follows or during the analysis of data, when most relevant.

Coghlan and Brannick warn about the need to manage “preunderstanding” - maintaining enough distance to be objective and critical, while benefiting from the preexisting relationships and trust with fellow employees (2015: 182-194). Coghlan (2007) warns that “insider researchers are part of their organisational culture, and therefore, there is much that they do not see, and they may find it difficult to stand back from it in order to assess and critique it” (2007: 339).

Coghlan also argues that insider action research can be seen to involve managing three interlocking challenges (Coghlan and Brannick 2015: 182-194) that can be especially relevant for doctoral researchers operating in their own organisations. First, preunderstanding means that the insider action researcher has to simultaneously maintain and expand trust and closeness with fellow organisational participants while also create distance from the organisation to be capable of critical analysis - no easy feat. Second, the researcher must hold the dual roles of researcher and organisational participant through any conflicts of interest which may occur. Third, the insider must balance the current research project with future career aspirations within the organisation she is researching.

Coghlan and Brannick (2015) also discuss some of the ethical issues which emerge from PAR, such as balancing research and professional values,

obtaining approval from internal review boards and corporate leadership, and maintaining trust with co-workers and research subjects (2015: 197-212). While many of these were not applicable to this study, they are still worth review. It is also worth remembering that inside action researchers may not be fully cognizant of their ethical or moral positions while conducting research, and may overestimate how much perspective or influence they have within the organisation they are studying (Ferguson and Ferguson 2001).

There are also ethical concerns mentioned in the literature specifically related to the group-orientation of organisational studies. Coughlan and Brannick (2015) encourage vigilant attention to maintaining relationships and distance over time, to allow organisations to change over time in a way that can be honestly studied. Schippers et al. (2012) note that reflecting as an individual, rather than a team, can dampen the effects of team reflection on innovation and creativity, instead encouraging holistic reflection between all group members.

Ultimately, many of the ethical issues described by Coghlan and Brannick (2015) can be attributed to positionality and the nature of power and authority in pre-existing relationships. One's position within both society and the organisations being studied is a pivotal source of biases and perspectives which will affect one's reflections (Sandywell et al. 2014; Berger 2015). One of the core concerns with participatory action research that will be discussed later - namely, the power dynamics between researcher/participant and fellow participants - is relevant at this juncture because, as Coghlan and Brannick (2015) note,

positionality and power dynamics are at the forefront of any reflective research conducted within one's own organisation.

Finally, before moving to the logistics of the thesis research, it is worth noting that the primary methodology of this thesis - the use of journals and reflexive memos - is derived from a strong body of literature which argues that these methods can alleviate some of the problems that can occur when conducting PAR in one's own organisation. Coghlan and Brannick (2015: 64-66) note that journaling and reflective memos allow the researcher to connect with material as a first-person researcher while maintaining a distance from the organisational goals.

Many authors note that journaling and writing reflective memos allow for reflection within organisations (McNiff and Whitehead 2009; Saldana 2013; Luttenberg et al. 2016). McNiff and Whitehead (2009) discuss how reflective writings in an organisational setting can help the researcher deal with conflicting emotions as both researcher and member of organisational staff. Schein (1999, 2013) argues that a reflective writing model that emphasises observation, reaction, judgment, and intervention (ORJI) is ideal for organisational research because it allows the researcher to conceptualise professional actions as part of the intervention phase of reflection.

As will be discussed next in the methodology section, personal journaling and professional reflective memos were ideal for collecting data at ADP and MOI. These memos also allowed the researcher to execute his position within

ADP and MOI while also reflecting on the efficacy of PPP and learning changes over an extended period.

With these limitations and challenges in mind, it is now possible to examine the methodology used in this thesis research. At all times, it is necessary to be aware of the role of the researcher, both within the study and within the organisation being studied. Therefore, discussion of the methodology will begin with an description of the organisations, informants, and situations examined over the three year research period, with keen attention paid to the limitations posed by the author's position as an advisor and the challenges faced when applying the theoretical principles of participatory action research to an organisation where little change can be influenced.

# Chapter 6: Methods for Insider Action Research

Over the course of this thesis' research period, the author held a challenging combination of roles: strategic adviser for both the ADP and MOI, and inside action researcher. In order to generate meaningful data while also participating fully as a working inside action researcher, the author depended heavily on reflective memos, document analysis, and other forms of qualitative data collection, such as observation, informal discussion, and interviews. This chapter provides the layout of research design, as well as an explanation of the iterative research cycles used to generate and reflection upon data. This chapter will also detail the theory behind and practicalities of specific data collection methods, such as memoing and informal observations.

## 6.1 Context of Study

This study was conducted at ADP and MOI from 2012 to the first quarter of 2015. As was described in Chapter Two, this project consisted of several levels of research during a time of organisational development and learning. At the Emirate-level ADP, the development and deployment of the use of force and rules of pursuit policies provided the author with the opportunity to research PPP development in the UAE, but also allowed the MOI to study PPP deployment in preparation for larger PPP project in 2013. In her role as an adviser in the MOI, the author was able to observe and participate in the ministry's larger efforts to development federal-level policy. When these federal policies faced struggles at

the end of 2013, the author was able to gain perspective on OL and change by reflecting on changes to the PPP development process at the federal-level in the UAE.

During the course of research, Strategy Department of the ADP had approximately 5 employees and MOI's had approximately 12 of employees, most of whom interacted with the researcher in some capacity, albeit often in an advisor or observer relationship. Over the course of the research, the author worked with more than one hundred main informants in a variety of roles. Most of the participants in this research were constant respondents during the research period, but the number of them grew and their responsibilities widely changed.

Initially, the members of the policy project preparation team were chosen:

- 4 policy liaison officers
- 2 policy section leaders
- 2 members of top management
- an outsourced consultant
- the researcher's strategic advisor

This preparation team worked to establish a policy unit and PPP across the MOI/ADP. Over the course of the research, two persons from the liaison policy team left. Nevertheless, this did not influence the momentum of the PPP. These participants increased to include the PEC along with the process owner (assigned to the permanent committee for making policy) and stakeholders. The team name also changed from 'project preparation team' to 'policy unit team'

along with the policy owner.

After about six months, a new advisor joined, 3 more were added to the consultant joint team, and 4 policy liaison officers were added to the policy unit team. The present researcher had been part of the project since the end of 2012 and had attended most of the meetings, workshops and discussions with all the parties involved in the policy project. This allowed semi-participant observation method to be applied. See below a simple diagram of the structure and number of participants involved (Figure 3).

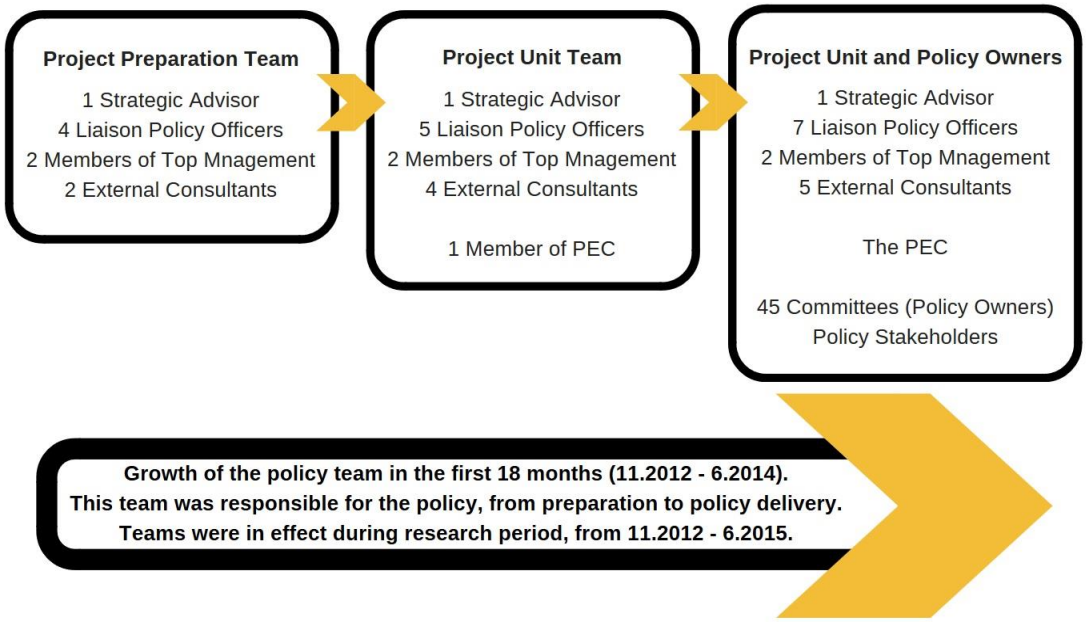


**Figure 3: Evolution of policy teams (2012-2015)**

All the policy participants had personally experienced the daily growth of policy participant numbers and the deployment of PPP, giving valuable opportunities to document and reflect on each stage of the process. The

reflection was concentrated on the challenges, issues, practices and actions of the participants which influenced and diversified the stages and practices of PPP.

The relationship between the inside action researcher and the participants is less time-controllable and complex than it might be, since it is not contractually based and not viewed as a relationship with informants but as one with a friend or coworker, notwithstanding the need to balance being a social researcher with the claims of friendship (Feldman et al. 2003; Walby 2010). Ethically, the author was permitted by the MOI to conduct her research without notifying most informants because the reflection was already a part of her job description as an adviser in the Strategy Department. However, the researcher notified each organisation's management about the intention to conduct research and was allowed to proceed so long as no security information was disclosed.

### 6.2 Design of Study

This study took advantage of the greatest benefit of action research: the constant reflection, flexibility, and adaptability that comes with studying change in real time. Inside action research was chosen as a framework and methodology in recognition of the author's dual role as a researcher and a participant within a governmental ministry in the midst of organisational change through the application of new public management principles during PPP

development. Because of setbacks during PPP planning in the MOI in 2013, the author was then able to develop an additional pair of inside action research cycles to study OL. By viewing her research and reflective journals through the lens of action research cycles, the author could better understand how her findings were applicable both within her organisation and to academics at large.

### 6.2.1 Inside Action Research Cycles

This study is designed around a series of inside action research cycles that help illuminate different aspects of the research conducted at MOI/ADP. These inside action research cycles to be described are detailed in Table 1.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ADP | **First Force/Pursuit PPP Development Cycle**<br>(02.2012 - 12.2012)<br>• Construction<br>• Planning<br>• Action<br>• Evaluation | **Second Force/Pursuit PPP Refinement Cycle**<br>(01.2013 - 03.2015)<br>• Re-construction<br>• Re-planning<br>• Action<br>• Re-evaluation |
| MOI | **First Core PPP Development Cycle (01.07.2012 - 01.12.2013)**<br>• Construction<br>• Planning 90 PPP<br>• Action (MOI unable to progress on PPP development for majority of policies)<br>• Evaluation (reduction to 25 policies) | **Second Core PPP Refinement Cycle (01.12.2013 - 30.03.2015)**<br>• Re-construction<br>• Re-planning 22 policies<br>• Action<br>• Re-evaluation (author not in role for full policy implementation period) |
| **UAE** | **Thesis Research Cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002)**<br>• Content reflection<br>• Process reflection<br>• Premise reflection (Mezirow 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000) | |

**Table 1: Hierarchy of inside Action Research Cycles**

Initially, the research was conceptualised as two levels of research cycles, modeled after Zuber-Skerritt and Perry's (2002) notion of core research cycles and thesis research cycles. The core research cycle were oriented around the reflection on and application of lessons learned from the ADP use of force/rules of pursuit policies (see Table 2 below). Inside action research helped the author as both a participant and a researcher to take the lessons learned from the Emirate-level ADP PPP cycles and apply them to the larger federal-level MOI PPP experience in 2013-2015. The author also advised the ADP on improving the glossary for the use of force/rules of pursuit policies during this

research cycle. As time progressed during the research period, the author was able to refine the reflection and data collection methods to improve the quality of the data collection through these iterative core inside action research cycles.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Cycle One: 02.2012 - 12.2012* | Construction | Author decides to focus on the use of force and rules of pursuit PPP development process in her research as a way of studying the PPP experience in the UAE. |
| | Planning | Author decides to use reflective memoing, document analysis, and direct observation to study PPP development and implementation in her own organisation. |
| | Action | Author observes the planning and deployment of the PPP for the use of force and rules of pursuit policies in the ADP. Author's team develops new documentation to improve PPP in ADP. |
| | Evaluation | Author evaluates the use of force and rules of pursuit rules as developed in 2012 in order to translate these lessons for PPP development at the MOI. Author reflects on how her observation of the ADP PPP deployment could be better studied in order to produce better findings for the MOI. |
| *Cycle Two: 1.2013 -3.2015* | Re-construction | With MOI decision to study PPP experience in ADP and apply those lessons to larger PPP development, author decides to focus on team communication, PPP document development, and knowledge transfer. |
| | Re-planning | Author orients reflective memoing toward new focuses in order to explore issues most relevant to PPP development at the federal-level. |
| | Action | Author continues to observe the implementation of use of force and rules of pursuit policies by the ADP, and incorporates those findings into recommendations for the MOI. |
| | Re-evaluation | Author ceases to serve as advisor on these projects, so does not participate in final re-evaluations of the use of force and rules of pursuit PPP implementation. Author re-evaluates her own research process and experiences in preparation for writing. |

**Table 2: Pair of PPP Focused Inside Action Research Cycles at the Emirate-Level (ADP)**

### 6.2.2 Thesis Research Cycle: Zuber-Skerritt, Perry, and Mezirow

The meta-reflection thesis research cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002), which occurred over the course of the entire researching, reflecting, and

writing processes, allowed the author to reflect on her role in the organisation and the experience of deploying PPP in the UAE. This meta-level analysis of the experience of being an advisor during the PPP of a monarchical state provides insight into the ideas of public policy, NPM, and modernisation in the Global South. This data generation was conducted using Mezirow's (1990, 1991, 1997, 2000) triad of content reflection, process reflection, and premise reflection.

Many of the reflections in the reflective journals, observations, and document analysis that are used in this thesis relate to *content reflectio*n. This includes discussions of PPP development and implementation in the ADP and the MOI. However, on another level, the author reflected on how the staff of the MOI learned during the PPP development process from 2013 to 2014; this *process reflectio*n allowed the author to reflect on OL and the efficacy of new public management principles as applied to the MOI. Finally, premise reflection was vital in understand the underlying assumptions and social situations that affected this research, particularly in relation to the power dynamics and politics of PPP development in the UAE, and the effects of the Emirates' client-patron cultural context on policy development. Including these three levels of analysis (content, process, and premise) also allowed the author to reflect on the role of the researcher in inside action research, the emotional stresses of serving as an adviser during a multi-phase policy initiative, and the questions faced when applying Western theoretical concepts to Global South research.

### 6.2.3 Inside Action Research Cycle and Organisational Learning

In addition to the core research cycle within the ADP and the overarching thesis research cycle, during the course of this thesis research, the author was able to develop a pair of mid-level inside action research cycles at the federal level MOI in order to study OL in the public sector of the UAE. As described in Chapter 2, the author was serving in an advisory position within the MOI and ADP during the process of PPP deployment from 2012 to 2015; at the end of 2013, there were massive setbacks to the MOI initiative that required OL and a reboot of the author's MOI-oriented inside action research cycle. As displayed in Table 3, the author was able to complete a pair of inside research action cycles at the federal MOI level: the 2012-2013 first phase of PPP development of ninety policies, and the 2013-2014 actual planning and development of the twenty-two best policies. The author was able to adjust her research and reflection methods after the first inside action research cycle to better generate data regarding OL and to ensure the quality of the data drawn from the MOI's second attempt at the development of PPP.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ***Cycle Two*** *(7.2012 - 12.2013)* | Construction | HH Sheikh Saif decrees the development of ninety new policies across the MOI. Author's department is tasked with PPP planning. Author's team is also tasked with reflecting on ADP's PPP experience to advise MOI. |
| | Planning | Author's team established MOI Policy Section Team to manage and support the committees developing PPP, giving author inside research position to observe and reflect on PPP development process. |
| | Action | Author reflected on PPP development process among committees and policy owners. Author also participated in process of developing best twenty-two policy ideas. |
| | Evaluation | Author and her Strategic Department evaluate PPP development and determine that process has not succeeded as intended; department encourages improving approach to PPP development. |
| MOI Decision to Restructure PPP Development (late 2013) | | |
| ***Cycle One*** *(01.2014 - 03.2015)* | Re-construction | Author decides to continue reflective memoing, but begin researching OL at the MOI level, to examine how MOI utilised lessons from ADP PPP and previous year's setbacks. |
| | Re-planning | Author plans to add reflections on knowledge transfer, triple-loop learning, and interorganisational learning during research. |
| | Action | Author observes PPP planning and development process through 2014 for twenty-two policies, reflecting through memoing and analysing relevant documents. |
| | Re-evaluation | Author reflects on core research cycle data, as well as thesis research data, to explore ideas in OL at the MOI. |

**Table 3: Pair of Organisational-Learning Focused Inside Action Research Cycles at the Federal Level (MOI)**

The overall duration of the research project was three years. The first organisational core action research cycle began with the ADP's announcement to begin the use of force and rules of pursuit policy implementation initiative in mid-2012. This first cycle of construction, planning, action, and evaluation, which was used to study the struggles to launch the organisation-wide PPP process, concluded in late 2013. With the organisational decision to break the PPP apart

and distribute work, the 2014 second cycle of re-construction, re-planning, action, and re-evaluation provided the material necessary to generate reflective data on OL. This second inside action research cycle was conducted from early 2014 until the first quarter of 2015, when the author terminated her research.

These inside research cycles constituted the frameworks that allowed the author to examine PPP development, NPM in the UAE, and OL. The two core research cycles - one focusing on PPP development at the Emirate-level ADP and one focusing on OL at the federal-level MOI - compliment each other and provide the material needed to develop several academic and practical findings of merit. Reflections on inside action research and on the Emirati experience are also developed through the thesis research cycle which underpinned this entire research. Before discussing the observations, analysis, and conclusions drawn from these cycles of research, it is necessary to detail the actual data collection methods which allowed for research.

### 6.3 Data Collection Methods

The continuously interwoven layers of inside action research are made possible by the data collected and generated through the use of observing and informal interviewing, reflective memos and journaling, and document analysis. The author was not only prepared to be flexible in delaying much of the uncontrollable data collection and engagement, but also in concurrently and simultaneously changing the research design. This was because unexpected observation might produce different but valuable research outcomes. Data

generation in this thesis was always supported with reflection and discussion, taking advantage of the fact that action research is never linear; it adopts an iterative and recursive hermeneutic “circular” approach that is inherent in action research.

Data was collected using three primary methods: conversations with and observations of participants, reflective memos and journals, and document analysis. The researcher conducted participant observation and interviewing daily during working hours. Journaling, reflection, memo writing, and document analysis was conducted after work daily in line with the day’s relevant events.

### 6.3.1 Observation/Interviewing

The present researcher conducted more than 100 semi-participant observations while attending workshops or meetings. This was not difficult, given her presence at the time in the organisation and policy project. Therefore, the acceptability and availability of the data resulted in the researcher’s being allowed to gather data freely as one of the participants. The data’s accessibility was increased by her engagement with other participants in the field.

Experienced observation provides more accurate evidence than findings derived through statistical analysis (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Heron and Reason 1996). Another advantage of using informal observation during action research is that it allows researchers to collect information concurrently with analysing it (Bulmer and Warwick 1993a). The simultaneous analysis of findings

enables researchers to identify gaps in the research and ways to remedy them (Heron and Reason 1996). Some experiences cannot be described adequately, or may contain bias. To avoid this, informal observation as an inside participant provides a unique approach to identifying hidden experiences and social phenomena (Reason and Bradbury 2007).

Interviewing in this research was combined with informal observation. Interviews were included to rapidly improve the research outcomes and allowed the author to consider the participants' explanation of their actions and decisions in the making of public policy. The informal interview (discussion and conversation) permits participants to interpret extensively why their behaviours, actions or decisions were chosen, and this improve the conceptualisation. Furthermore, the reflective memos describing the combined results of participant observation and informal interview were critical, because they provided the opportunity to understand the influence of the UAE context on PPP and NPM. Writing combined reflective memos based on data gathering supports the development of a better understanding of the sub processes required to resolve issues (Dahlke et al. 2015).

In summary, the author focused on writing readable notes which included interpretive notes. The findings of this thesis (Chapter 7) include reflective pauses which help the reader gain insight into some of the informal observation and casual interviewing she experienced. The author reflects on and connects these interpretive notes to theoretical concepts (Emerson et al. 2011;

Jarzabkowski et al. 2014; Liu and Maitlis 2014).

### 6.3.2 Reflective Memos

In this thesis, memoing was the key method to reflect on observations made during research. Reflective memos were intended to document the experience and outcomes of the research. These memos were strategically structured and constructed according to the nature of the content, research aims, preferences and ability of the researcher (Birks et al. 2008).

In this research, the author adopted various memo forms and structures from a range of authors (Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Richards 2005; Charmaz 2006). However, she mainly followed the advice of Charmaz (2006), to do what works for one's research and use what suits the presentation of its ideas; in this case, reflective notes included comments on conversational style, and recorded processes, decisions and actions. Memos were written in a notebook, the "reflective journal" and then securely transferred to a PC (Clarke 2005). They were written in sequence according to the stages in the PPP and were therefore easy to retrieve (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Over time, the memos became longer, more complex, and more open. In this effort to convey the author's understanding, the production of analysis and memos flowed naturally, in particular when her engagement with the data increased. In addition, the author strove to incorporate her memos later when writing up the findings (Eaves 2001; Birks et al. 2008).

Most importantly, memos helped the author to maintain research momentum and productivity (Charmaz 2006; Polit and Beck 2006). Using memos in this research was important because it analytically simplified and critically informed the research timing to award intellectual knowledge in the final stages, unlike other methods which might fail to provide proven intellectual capital (Clarke 2005; Birks et al. 2008).

One of the most important uses of memos is to understand how decision-making operates in real-time (Speziale and Carpenter 2007). In this research, the examination of decision-making within the MOI and the Strategy Department demonstrates to the reader how decisions were reached in the various phases of policy development. In addition, memos recorded the progress of the study and the changes resulting from the diverting of the PPP to a new direction at the end of 2013, taking into account the decisions related to issues, actions, practices, procedures, analysis, etc.

Moreover, many memos were written at each stage of the PPP deployment, allowing for reflection and adaptation during each cycle of core inside action research, as well as the thesis research cycle. These notes vary from issues of concern in the planning phase to verified notes during the operation, to conceptualised memos that changed the PPP. These natural changes in memo writing provided opportunities to enhance the author's writing skills while developing her writing style (Birks et al. 2008). Memoing allows for amendments, redundancies, and clarification (Clarke 2005: 85). It was an

effective tool in this research since it overcame the difficulties of moving from data collection to analysis. Indeed, it was an inspiration in writing the discussion chapter, since memos generate reflexivity (Clarke 2005; Birks et al. 2008).

Memos were used to support the interpretation and description of data from other sources, such as the field-notes of casual informal observation and informal interview transcripts. This incorporation sometimes ran the risk of diluting the differences between the authentic notes on participants and the researcher's reflections or conceptualisations (Glaser 1978; Birks et al. 2008). Nevertheless, incorporating or separating field-notes from memos is not essential or required and does not add value. Generally, memos were based on the author's preferences and what was suitable for the research area or its scope (Charmaz 2006). Structure was sought by differentiating between field-notes and reflective memos.

Critical reflective analysis started by organising the data, which were collected daily in observational notes while attending workshops, meetings, informal interviews (discussions or conversations) in a notebook or on paper. Nevertheless, playing two roles - participant and observer - simultaneously through being fully integrated in a public policy project team resulted in certain difficulties. Therefore, the researcher would take 10 to 15 minutes directly after each meeting, event or interview to read the notes made at the time, amend them and write reflective memos. If it was not possible due to time constraints, this would be shifted when back home when these notes were later reviewed or

re-written in tabular format, shown below in Table 4 (see Appendix 3 for an example).

| | |
|---|---|
| Reference | Document or memo reference; date and other markers |
| Subject | Event, situation, or material being examined |
| Policy | Policy focus |
| Field Notes | • Observational field notes, including reflective memos, informal interview data, descriptions of observations, and other data.<br>• Reflections on research cycles. |
| Lessons Learned | • Revisions, evaluations, and reflections about policies. |
| Recommended Action | • Actions taken to verify or resolve findings in field notes.<br>• Recommendations for improved practice or research methods. |
| **Table 4:** Format for data collection and reflective memos | |

This table was effective, since it allowed the researcher to revisit the data and reorganise them several times to make sense of the information, to look for organising ideas and patterns, and to reflect on the ideas and at the stage of reading and memoing to categorise them as themes or define lessons learned. Beyond these memos, the author was able to generate large amounts of data through analysis of the many documents which were created and utilised from 2012 to 2015 in the ADP and the MOI.

### 6.3.3 Document Content Analysis

In this research, document analysis was a valuable method of treating organisational policies (project outcome) and the lessons associated with and resulting from improved policy documentation. Documentation is the main

deliverable achievement for the policy projects of the MOI/ADP; hence it became important to examine a variety of policy documents, along with all the guidance documents of the organisation. These documents included:

- T1: template for studying the need for the policy
- T2: template for designing and proposing policy
- PDF: policy development file, including feedback of stakeholders, plan for implementation, and requirements for change

In addition, the researcher analysed 'social facts' (Atkinson and Coffey 2011): the related policy project documents which were shared and used in the research context, such as organisational memos, the procedures used, faxes, letters, emails, field notes, training materials, and more.

The documents were examined as part of the research process, which was influenced by the author's experience and reflexivity. The raw data derived from the documentation was described and interpreted to provide evidence and to understand, clarify and reflect upon the knowledge gained from analysing different methods of data collections (Bowen 2007; Rapley 2007; Corbin and Strauss 2008).

Often, documentation analysis was used in combination with some other qualitative collection method to test its validity. The intention was to reduce the chance of any bias which might have resulted from using a single collection method and to enhance the data's credibility by reinforcing the technique used for collecting qualitative data. The documentation analysis method was not used to replace other methods but collaboratively to support the interpretation of and

reflection on different data sources since it is very difficult to describe a day-to-day activity or OL from documents only. Nevertheless, document analysis could be an important source of data, remaining when the event or situation is finished.

Document analysis has several benefits. It textualises the search context where the participants operate, providing instant documentation of historical information which gives the text for the context. For example, the researcher benefitted from documented data as a way to add written materials to support her interviews or findings from informal observation. Understandably, it opened the door to further description, elaboration and interpretation with different policy stakeholders. According to Goldstein and Reiboldt (2004), information generated from document analysis interactively complements other qualitative methods of data collection.

Documentation can also be used as supplementary data in and of itself, shaping the inside action researcher's actions (Hansen 1995; Hoepfl 1997; Connell et al. 2001). In this research, the author used the various documents from the MOI and ADP, and her own memos to inform and tailor the PPP in her organisations, since these documents influence and position the terminology used for policy in the organisational context.

Additionally, documentation is used to keep track of changes. For instance, comparing different drafts of a policy by documentation (i.e. T1, T2, PDF) follows the development of the policy. Document analysis can show the

progress of learning and development by the organisation and stakeholders over time (Yin 1994).

Finally, document analysis can support other observations that seem odd or unusual by providing concrete evidence. A researcher is more inclined to believe in their research when the contradictions due to analysing data from different resources are identified. Document analysis can provide insight into why contradictions or strange data occurs (Angrosino and Mays de Perez 2000; Bowen 2007; Atkinson and Coffey 2011).

In fact, document analysis contributes substantially to an intensive single case study (event, organisation, etc.), aiming to enrich descriptions and in-depth understanding (Yin 1994; Stake 1995). This thesis research used document analysis to explore the major, minor, and contrary meanings of policy documentation which was filed from stakeholders at different stages of the UAE PPP. At the organisational level, the purpose of document analysis is to assess whether policy documents are fit for purpose, easy to use, contain all the required policy information, take account of the difficulties of fulfilling the requirements, indicate the stakeholders' understanding of the PPP, disclose its outlines, benefits and limitations, discover insights, solve problems, realise organisational value, grasp the narrative behind meaning, show common sense and knowledge or clarify the credibility of the evidence.

The most important focus for the researcher in document analysis is to demonstrate objectivity and sensitivity in selecting documents for analysis

(Strauss and Corbin 1998; Bowen 2007). The researcher should show the relevance of the documentation to the purpose, problems and issues of the research in improving the evaluation of evidence. Before evaluation, the researcher should demonstrate a critical and selective approach to the choice of documents, depending on their type, scope, completeness, the absentees, relevance, target stakeholders, purpose, developed version, research design method, etc. In addition, the researcher should focus not only on the number of pieces of evidence, but on their quality. The number of pieces of evidence greatly increased during the research process as questions arose and more information was sought from many different sources of data, not only documentation.

Moreover, document analysis considers timelines so as to indicate the learning journey and maturity of policy stakeholders' capacity to understand technical writing and fulfil the documented requirements (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006). The author deconstructed the templates and supplementary related documents at each stage of PPP to outline the issues and practices that encourage further exploration and categorisation. In addition, the researcher included reflections on her document analysis in the reflective memos and used the document analysis results to enrich the memos about informal observation.

### 6.3.4 Data Analysis

Data for this thesis was generated through critical reflective analysis of the memos, observations, and documents produced during the three years of

inside research at the ADP/MOI. Critical reflective analysis allowed the author to examine related ideas of PPP development, OL, and new public management within the Emirati context; as a method, reflective analysis also allowed the author to examine her role as an advisor and expatriate within the public sector of the UAE. These two levels of analysis, of the core research cycles and the thesis research cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002), are discussed below.

Organisational research and text work compose the writing style for a social context, invoking the essence of the researcher's observation and involvement in the social setting (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Van Maanen 1988; Watson 2011). The thesis records in a creative way what the author experienced and practised through relating the words that were spoken, and the action performed in a specific context or cultural framework. It is widely recognised that writing a text or notes is the core element in the observational method; nevertheless, it is very difficult to standardise rules for writing since it varies according to the social context (Fetterman 1989; Langley and Abdallah 2011; Van Maanen 2011; Yanow et al. 2012). However, it is important to have guidance in order to enhance the presentation of an observation-based text and ensure the quality of the "truth claim" (Jarzabkowski et al. 2014).

#### 6.3.4.1 Data Analysis of PPP and Organisational Reflection Data

Data analysis occurred in real time, during the process of research. Once the PPP development process began in the ADP in 2012, data analysis started

by examining memos for themes to organise the author's reflections. When the researcher started collecting data, she realised that it was impossible to include everything. Hence, as the research cycles continued, data collection was adjusted based on lessons learned through successive research cycles, and the reflexivity grew easier. This allowed cumulative knowledge to be generated better and set reflexivity in the context of iterative concepts.

After the data were organised, they were described, classified and interpreted through finding themes and patterns in what was done compared with what was planned, what was hidden and whether the context and people involved brought up any contradictions. The researcher did not do much coding because the research focuses on issues and practices and generates lessons to be learned. Hence, she defined those themes that represent common ideas, dimensions or factors with reference to each policy stage and discusses their analysis. She also examined her reflections along themes related to NPM, PPP, and OL.

#### 6.3.4.2 Reflection as Inside Action Researcher

In addition to the reflections on PPP, NPM, and OL that are described above, the author also sought to reflect on her own position, the efficacy of her methods, and the nature of IAR in her research setting. The author ultimately chose to use the inside action research approach because it provided a reflexive context to address the author's position as an adviser within her organisation.

At various points in her research, the author reflected on the experience

of being an adviser in her memos. She also expressed some of her frustrations with various challenges to PPP, learning, collaboration, or communication. But it was not until after her research window was closed that she stopped to reflect on her position as a woman, an expatriate, and a member of the Strategy Department, which itself has a unique position within the UAE public administration. These reflections allowed her to then reflect more broadly on the nature of PPP and public administration in the UAE at large. Thus, some of her data generation was also driven by her reflections on her dual role and specifically Emirati experiences.

Finally, part of the process of data generation as an inside action researcher is the continuous reflection on the quality of the data generated and the research conducted. Maintaining a high quality of data requires vigilance, but is easily possible during action research precisely because the iterative research cycles allow for adaptation to improve data collection quality. Levin (2003) encourages researchers, particularly those engaging in thesis research, to maintain attention on some core elements of the research experience: participation and cooperation with others in the organisation; attention to real-life problems; efforts to jointly collaborate to create shared understandings and interpretations; and development of practical, workable solutions to research challenges. The author's efforts, both as a researcher and a participant, reflect Levin's argument, and will be discussed further in this thesis.

As it was argued in the previous chapter, Shani and Pasmore's (2010)

provide a framework for ensuring the quality of the action research by calling the researcher's attention to four key points: maintaining awareness of the contextual factors which shape research; maintaining high quality relationships with participants; paying attention to factors which can affect the quality of the data generated; and monitoring outcomes of both the action studied and the reflections on the action research process itself (Shani and Pasmore 2010: 253). By focusing on these different aspects of the quality assurance process, an action researcher can maintain continuous self-awareness.

This chapter has laid out the methods which were used to conduct this thesis research. Through three inside action research cycles - two core research cycles and one larger thesis research cycle - the author was able to generate data regarding PPP, NPM, and OL in the UAE. Reflective memoing, observation, and document analysis all allowed for data collection and generation, and the author was able to capitalise on themes in her reflections and data to draw key findings on a variety of relevant topics. While these research cycles, and the data collection which constituted them, generated a vast amount of data, the author has opted to focus on some core academic and empirical findings, many of which are particularly interesting to those hoping to better understand action research which has been conducted in the Global South.

# Chapter 7: Findings and Recommendations

Now that the author has described the methods used to generate data during her inside action research in the Emirati public administration, she is able to present her findings, both theoretical and empirical. This thesis sought to engage with the literature discussing PPP, NPM, and OL, but since these discussions are heavily dominated by Western models, the author critically engages with these theorists and presents, in many cases, a meaningful non-Western alternative model or viewpoint. This thesis also succeeds in providing meaningful and meritable models and recommendations which can be applied in practical ways to public administrations and policy development in the UAE and abroad. But, before approaching those pragmatic findings, it is necessary to explore the author's data and see how it connects to the scholarship which drove the research questions from their inception.

## 7.1 Academic and Theoretical Findings

While evidence-based approaches to policy development and OL may provide powerful solutions to problems and challenges, theories help organisational leaders develop the best practices that can become more efficient solutions. Connecting theory to practical findings and recommendations allows the author to ground her experiences in her core research cycles with her reflections from her thesis research cycle, deepening the quality of empirical and

practical findings. In addition, many of the theories, particularly related to NPM and OL, were developed in the Global North, and lack sufficient comparison with real world examples from the Global South. As such, this thesis also provides the data of an Emirati case example to the growing body of literature that explores how “eclectically” (Polidano 1999) Western theories must be applied in the wide range of Global South contexts. This begins with an explanation of how the PPP cycle differs in the UAE compared to common Western models.

### 7.1.1 The PPP Cycle in the UAE

One of the primary purposes of this thesis was to examine PPP and policy development in the context of the UAE. This thesis contributes to the literature a Global South example of a PPP cycle that is currently operating in a command and control public administration (Baldwin and Cave 1999) struggling with NPM implementation. Thus, the literature review of PPP in this thesis provided an extensive discussion of the various stages of PPP common in the West for the express purpose of showing how the PPP cycle is notably different than the models used in hegemonic Western literature, particularly in relation to ideas of evaluation and consultation.

As a reminder, a generally accepted outline for the five stages of PPP used by many Western scholars (for example Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; Skok 1995; Bridgman and Davis 2003; Birkland 2015; Dunn 2015) include five steps:

- *Agenda setting*
- *Formulation*
- *Decision-making*
- *Implementation*
- *Evaluation*

Western authors (Hupe and Hill 2006; Howlett et al. 2009) argue that PPP stages will adopt the same principles of problem solving and thus follow a similar format, but the author found that, in the UAE, this hypothesis did not hold. As an adviser in the MOI and ADP, the author was part of the Strategy Department who, along with external consultants who were advising, developed the PPP format that would be used to plan and develop policies, which did not align with the Western model. The UAE PPP was based on best practices and previous experience, and while it was used to solve problems, the UAE PPP cycle was not tied, step by step, to Western problem solving models because Emirati government workers have a different understanding of how to solve problems, based on different understandings of interacting with authority. Thus, the Emirati PPP model shows a different orientation in its approach, which requires brief explanation below.

| Predominant Western PPP Model (Birkland 2015 and others) | Emirati PPP Model |
|---|---|
| • Agenda setting<br>• Formulation<br>• Decision-making<br>• Implementation<br>• Evaluation | • Studying need<br>• Drafting the policy<br>• PEC assessment<br>• Consultation<br>• Approval for implementation |

**Table 5: Comparison of PPP Models**

The first stage (1) is designed to *study the needs for the policy.* Policy should not be written without cause, and policy should be tailored to solve problems and address needs. In this stage, the policy owner determines the objective and purpose of the policy, thus defining its scope. These must be determined with reference to organisational priorities and capabilities, as well with attention to challenges that could occur. The policy owner must determine the risks associated with the potential policy, and complete an impact assessment. Finally, the policy owner must identify the stakeholders involved in the policy development, and determine which primary stakeholders will be most important in the policy development experience. This stage of the PPP cycle does not deviate significantly from the agenda setting stage of Western models (Kingdon 1995; Birkland 2015).

The information generated in this stage of the UAE PPP cycle is used to draft the T1 document, the primary deliverable for this first stage of Emirati PPP. This document is primarily concerned with organising the policy owner's findings while completing stage 1; this document also serves to facilitate the PEC's

evaluation of the actual need for the policy during the assessment stage (3). This first stage requires policy owner accountability, since the due diligence is on his part, so he is responsible for ensuring he does a thorough evaluation, for example, of all potentially interested stakeholders, or of all potential legal conflicts to note for later examination. He must assess all interdependencies for the hypothetical policy.

The second stage (2) is the step of the process where the policy is initially *drafted*. In this stage, the policy owner drafts the T2 document, a template which helps policy owners consider issues like scope, need, budget, legal requirements, and other factors which the PEC will question during the PEC assessment stage to follow. During this stage, the policy owners examine benchmarking practices and organisational challenges, combined with attention to best practices, to decide on available policy options. The policy owner usually discusses aspects of the T2 with the most relevant stakeholders, consulting with them and listening to feedback; this feedback, however, usually does not impact policy at this stage. The policy owner, upon completing the T2, will also prepare to present the policy proposal to the PEC by developing an early draft of the PDF.

The T2 document and the PDF document, as will be described later, are standardised templates which helped the Strategy Department guide policy owners as they developed their policies (Hood 1991; Gunningham et al. 1998; Salamon 2001; Birkland 2015). These templates were an effort by the Strategy

Department and the external consultants who designed them to apply NPM principles to PPP in the MOI, and to take lessons from previous policy experiences to find ways to get policy owners to better prepare for PEC assessment. This first draft of the PDF was often under-prepared before PEC assessment, however, especially in terms of the requirements for stakeholders. In many cases, policy owners who had not sufficiently addressed stage 1, and were thus attempted to develop policy without a clear understand of need, struggled greatly during stage 2; this is where many unsuccessful policy proposals lose momentum and fail, even before PEC assessment.

The third stage (3) of PPP in the UAE, which is a point of marked departure from other PPP cycles, is the *assessment of policy drafts by the PEC* (or, in some cases, other relevant authority). The PEC reviews the T2, which allows them to assess whether the organisation is capable of implementing the policy. The PEC considers organisational readiness, priorities, and capacity to advise on the feasibility of the policy proposal. Many are rejected; those which are accepted by the overarching organisational authority of the PEC are allowed to proceed to the consultation stage. This stage, for successful proposals, then continues to a second T2 draft which incorporates the PEC feedback, and a second PDF that begin to incorporate stakeholder feedback in correlation with the input of the PEC.

The fourth stage (4) of Emirati PPP, the *consultation* stage, is an opportunity to build upon the foundation of the T2 and PDF drafts. The policy

owner unveils his updated T2 and PDF that have been improved with PEC feedback and begins to gather feedback on these new drafts from relevant stakeholders. During this stage, the policy owner consults with legal affairs to ensure the compliance of the policy content with laws and regulations. The policy owner also begins to develop an actual set of requirements for implementation through planning in conjunction with stakeholders and experts. The final T2 document is produced, while the PDF goes through a transformation into its third draft. This is the stage in which a policy's interdependencies must be fully explored, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged. Depending on the interest level of the policy owner, stakeholder feedback about practical implementation of policy on the ground can shape the PDF. This stage may actually be a long stage which overlaps with earlier stages for policy owners who actively seek bottom-up stakeholder participation in the planning process.

The final stage (5) is focused on *policy approval for implementation*. In this stage, the policy owner consults with the stakeholders to finalise all requirements and all plans for implementation. The policy owner will then prepare a comprehensive presentation for their approving authority (PEC, policy council, etc.). If successful, the policy is approved by the appropriate authority. This stage, rather than the previous, most closely aligns with the Western public policy decision-making stage (3). After approval, the policy owner implements the policy with the support of stakeholders. Finally, the policy unit follows up on

implementation and measures performance to ensure effective policy delivery. These five steps of the Emirati PPP process are summed up in the Appendix 1, but can be summarised most succinctly here as:

- Stage 1: Studying the need for policy
- Stage 2: Drafting the policy
- Stage 3: Policy draft assessment by the PEC
- Stage 4: Consultation
- Stage 5: Policy approval for implementation

There are several differences between the UAE MOI/ADP PPP cycle and the ones more commonly found in PPP literature (Hill 2013), some of which are significantly relevant to understanding how the Emirati context shapes the policy experience. Perhaps the most important of these is that the Emirati PPP cycle lacks a stage of evaluation at the end of the policy cycle. In the case of the author's research, her department's responsibility was to complete policy development for as many of the twenty-two successful policies as possible, not to actually implement them, meaning that the author would not be involved in any evaluation of policy implementation. Instead, the final evaluation of the product of these PPP cycles was the policy itself, which was approved for implementation by the end of stage 5. The responsibility for policy implementation are the policy owners and stakeholders, rather than the policy sections, external consultants, or experts; evaluation of these stakeholders' efforts are entirely separate from the policy process.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** In my reflections, I noted that many of the policy owners and stakeholders commented that they felt continuously evaluated, from documentation to

committee meetings. This may have been because the Strategy Department is organisationally directly below HH, so many policy owners felt the need to gain favor, and thus felt constantly evaluated. However, this may explain why there is not a need for a specific evaluation step of the UAE PPP cycle - while documentation has to be approved, the policy and its values are being continuously evaluated; thus, a separate step of evaluation is unnecessary to have within PPP (though, again, evaluation of how a policy is implemented is valuable, just outside the realm of PPP).

One of the major differences between the more common Western PPP cycle and the Emirati PPP cycle is that, because the UAE PPP model was designed for a command and control organised ministry, the first two stages of Emirati PPP are not oriented toward listening to stakeholders to gaining outside input. Thomas' point (2001) that early policy formulation requires dialogue, to encourage early problem solving and strong communication, conflicts with the realities of Emirati command and control structured public administration. Rather, the actual studying of the need for policy by MOI policy owners often entailed determining needs with little consultation of on-the-ground stakeholders, to the point of being more theoretical or hypothetical speculating than actual gathering of data. The drafting policy stage (2) was, in most cases, based on determining pre-existing best practices rather than listening to suggestions from stakeholders. In this sense, the UAE's first two stages are much more oriented toward command and centralised control, rather than the more concerted effort toward stakeholder engagement implied in the more Western PPP model.

The second major difference is that PEC approval, occurring in the middle (stage 3) of UAE PPP, determines whether a policy is approved. The UAE PPP model requires policy owners to achieve PEC approval, even though

the PEC is approving a policy proposal with little explanation within in as to how the policy proposed would realistically be implemented (and one of the reasons that only twenty-two of the ninety original proposals moved to stage 4 is precisely because policies were brought before the PEC without any clear idea whatsoever how they would be implemented.

In the UAE PPP model, external stakeholders are not asked for extensive input until the consultation stage (4), after the policy proposal has already been approved by the PEC. This demonstrates that Emirati policy is, regardless of how many NPM principles are applied to the country, still based on vertical hierarchy. The authority, in the author's case being the PEC, determines the need and potential of a policy and approves it before significant input from stakeholders. Of course, in some individual policy cases described in this thesis, particularly in the discussion of bottom-up approaches, stakeholder feedback was actively sought and considered before development of the T2; as with all real life cases, there are exceptions. But the general organisation of the PPP cycle in the UAE seeks acceptance from the authority, usually based on best practices, before significant collaborative input.

Thus, the author is arguing that differences between the PPP model in the UAE and other, Western models largely stem from differing views on the nature of authority, evaluation, and consultation. Aspects of the PPP cycle, including early consultation from lower-level stakeholders, are newer concepts; as will be discussed later, the author found in her research that only some policy

owners were embracing bottom-up approaches, and many of the collaborative aspects of the PPP were negated by competitiveness, nepotism, and mistrust. These reflect a larger issue, both theoretical and practical, that permeates the MOI: the uneven and at times unpopular application of NPM principles of decentralisation, collaboration, and standardisation.

### 7.1.2 New Public Management Theory and the UAE

New public management is built on a number of principles, such as decentralisation, competition, outsourcing, and standardised documentation (Haque 2004; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Kalimullah et al. 2012; Liddle 2017). In NPM's idealised form, power is disaggregated, and responsibility is diffused across a horizontal collection of departments, organisations, and committees, each specialised and trained to handle their respective role. But decentralisation is heavily dependent on the nature of the center, and therefore the process of decentralisation of power in public administrations will function very differently in democratic, monarchical, or corporatist governmental frameworks. Therefore, studies conducted in the Global South, such as this thesis, which discuss the actual deployment of NPM principles in real world examples are invaluable for determining how Western theories can be adapted or embraced as true to experience in the Global South.

To be blunt, much of the literature that already exists regarding the deployment of NPM in the UAE argue that the experience has been a mixture of

successes and failures (Geray & Salem 2012; Salem and Jarrar 2012; Salem 2016; Mansour 2017). Many of these failures are predicated on participants being unwilling to change from traditional, hierarchical mindsets about when consensus is necessary. Salem and Jarrar (2012) argue that the UAE federal public sector has been unable to fully embrace NPM because participants preferred a more "silo" shaped command structure, developing deep and powerful mistrust for other departments rather than fostering a government-wide sense of collaboration and cooperation. Ultimately, Salem and Jarrar argue,

> the prevailing competitive approach in the UAE government reduced the level of trust among competing individuals and institutions. Consequently, this had a negative impact on the flow of information, ideas, and knowledge between local and federal government entities in the UAE, hence reducing levels of collaboration within government and ultimately limiting potential cross-government innovations. (Salem and Jarrar 2012: 1)

The author can confirm Salem and Jarrar's main argument - policy section teams and committees often exhibited behavior which demonstrated mistrust, frustration, lack of cooperation, desire for individual recognition over group success, and lack of care for outcomes. It became clear during the PPP development stage (2013) at the MOI that many of the forty-five committees were more interested in gaining ministerial approval than actually developing executable policy or the frameworks necessary to plan executable policy. As a result, the author often reflected on how policy owners and stakeholders would state that their work was on track or concluded solely to gain approval from their superiors, regardless of the actual status of their progress. Approval from the top

was more important than practical, horizontal collaboration, and far fewer policies (twenty-two rather than ninety) were able to move to the planning stage than anticipated.

One common and problematic occurrence reported by external consultants and observed by the author was the tendency for policy owners to declare that workshop sessions on PPP development were productive and completed, even if these sessions had been fruitless or, in some cases, may not even have occurred. Policy stakeholders regularly reported consensus on key policy issues, only later to admit that someone had been left out of the planning process. Often, the exclusion was intentional to speed up the process or to avoid conflict. This disingenuity caused delays when stakeholders finally were brought on to collaborate.

On several occasions, external consultants expressed frustrations that Emirati policy owners delayed conversations, cancelled meetings, or rescheduled consultation sessions. It was never unusual to see workshops conducted with the minimum number of stakeholder attendees possible. Stakeholders rarely sought input outside of their pre-existing position in the larger command and control hierarchy of the federal-level or Emirate-level administration - they maintained hierarchies of whose input was considered important, even when ordered to gain input from other related parties. Opportunities for collaboration and shared knowledge were usually passed over, and their waste was cataclysmic.

The author regularly found that the overarching, tribalistic idea that each policy owner was responsible for solving his unit's problems permeated many of the committees of the MOI; management was often not made aware of challenges faced during PPP development. In many cases, suggested policies had overlap or interdependent foci, requiring more than one policy unit's cooperation to resolve conflicts between stakeholders, but since each policy owner refused to trust or cooperate with other policy owners, cross-listed PPPs could not be easily developed. Policy owners claimed they were gaining input from other stakeholders when their inability to solve problems demonstrated that input was not occurring. These inadequacies were often hidden from managers, external consultants, and other stakeholders out of mistrust for lateral committees and a need to appear in control of one's position, both signs of unsuccessful deployment of NPM principles of decentralisation and collaboration.

Part of the reason that policy owners hesitated to express their concerns about problems is that many expressed a dislike for documentation and other management requirements that many felt had been forced upon them. The sense that there was "too many new requirements" caused many problems with NPM deployment in both the MOI and the ADP. For example, frustrations with requirements was an initial concern for the Strategy Department in late 2012, when senior management in at policy project kickoff meeting expressed serious concerns about the gap of integration between ADP/MOI current applied

western management systems (such as the EFQM excellence model).

By Jan 2013, the ADP policy section team found that many people from middle management were visiting their office to question how policies would fit into the current organisation system. It seems many policy stakeholders were reluctant to engage with ADP and MOI policy teams in the policy project because they are not able to understand why more management requirements had to be forced upon them. In early 2013, for instance, a senior manager from the investigation department asked

> "*Why do we need policies, what are they for? We applied already many managements and specialised systems. Why should we bombard our staff with new system requirements and why should we set new documentation to comply with when the main objective is to deliver services efficiently? We have had enough and most of our officers are field officers who are interested in operations, not management requirements*."

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE**: This memo includes reflection on my feelings at the time of this meeting. As a participant, I felt uncomfortable knowing how to respond as the senior manager stared at me, awaiting my answer. As a strategic adviser, I was concerned with his employees' feelings that they were overloaded. I sympathised with his concern, and knew that many felt that there were too many requirements and new documents to submit. However, having expertise in quality management, I knew that the documentation they did not want to fill out was very important, since it is used as (investigations) evidence in court. I also knew these management documents were beneficial during review meetings to improve performance. Thus, it was difficult to find a response which presented both nuanced positions.

I told the Investigations' Department manager that "it is crucial to understand policy purposes and positioning in our organisational context." I also made him aware that "it is planned by both policy sections to conduct awareness sessions on policy projects to clarify your issues and concerns." In this way, I made it clear that compliance with managerial requirements was necessary, but that his concerns would be listened to, an important way of using soft power to ensure continued stakeholder engagement.

Another significant problem integrating NPM principles with UAE public administration was in the lengthy and painful process of collaborating with

external consultants on the drafting of the governance framework (GF) documentation. As is discussed in more detail elsewhere in this chapter, it took almost nine months for external collaborators to produce acceptable GF documents. This was primarily because members of the Strategy Department, knowing Emirati command and control structure and stakeholder perspective, forced the external consultants to ignore NPM principles of accountability, transparency, and decentralisation and instead write the GF documentation vaguely, to protect stakeholder accountability. This was frustrating for the external consultants, it seemed, but in the case of the GF documentation, it seemed that the external consultant was not being responsive enough to the author's teams' demands, and that this demonstrated the difficulties in absorbing NPM principles at such a broad level.

Ultimately, the author found that the mistrust that Salem and Jarrar (2012) argued was growing in Emirati public administration as NPM is rapidly introduced into the UAE was present in her own work in the MOI and the ADP. NPM adoption has not been with some concerns in the UAE. Based on the problems with centralisation, collaboration, trust, and engagement, it is fair to say that the application NPM in Emirati public administration requires more attention and care. Thus, it is the author's recommendation that the ADP or MOI do critical evaluation about their needs for applying NPM practices before they decide to implement. For instance, the author suggests utilising a pilot project or other form of evaluation to study how a new system will integrate with current

systems so as to avoid conflict and allow for better integration. This includes recognising the cultural and social factors inherent to the administrative context - in this case, the Emirates - and understanding what consequences come from those factors.

Examining a Global South example such as the UAE case studied in this thesis, it is easy to borrow from pre-existing theories derived from the West. In a sense, Emirati public servants like the author draw from best practices when creating new deliverables, and what are pre-existing theories from the West if not the academic equivalent of best practices? Yet, just as the author argues that there are other ways of applying NPM principles or other forms for the PPP cycle, so too are there other ways to take pre-existing theories and apply them to new Global South cases, to see what illuminates and what obfuscates. Thus, it is not the wholesale acceptance, but rather the modified application, of OL theory that follows, which will provide insight into ways that Emirati public administrators can improve their policy processes.

### 7.1.3 Organisational Learning Theory Applied

This thesis developed out of a desire to understand how policy development occurred and could be improved in the UAE. One of the keys to improving organisations, whether operationally or logistically, is to learn from mistakes and successes of the past. The author aims to address the literature gap by exploring the UAE's unique take on Western PPP and NPM practices,

describing her limited knowledge of how OL improved policy-making practices in the Middle East, Gulf region, and specifically the UAE. The author reflected upon events and how they impact and inform the improvement of performance and current practice by translating experience into lessons learned, thus contextualising UAE knowledge. Further, this thesis adopted an evidence-based approach empirically to understand that contextualised knowledge generates changes in ongoing practices, and utilises reflection to understand the many levels of OL. Upon reflection, the author believes there is academic merit in exploring how her Strategy Department utilised triple-loop learning to take lessons learned from ADP/MOI policy to inform the MOI PPP experience of 2013-2015.

In July 2012 when the MOI Minister HH Sheikh Saif decreed that each committee would produce two new policies, it was a noble but massive undertaking for the entire MOI. As the Strategy Department assigned to establish PPP for these policies, and support the delivery of the ninety policies as per HH's decree, it was difficult to assimilate how this decree will be executed, largely because previous experiences of developing strategies and improvement models. The Strategy Department was well aware of the complexity of implementing such the requirements of so many changes at once, with reference to these policies' impact not only on current systems (context, organisational hierarchy, current working system, culture), but also in employees, stakeholders, customers, public services delivery, and budget.

Single-loop learning allows individuals to gain knowledge from the everyday events that occur in their work, internalising understandings based on the mental models they have created to explain information and events. Throughout research, the author was able to reflect on instances of single-loop learning, where policy owners and other policy team members took feedback and made observations, and then used that data to change ideas or approaches, based on pre-existing understandings of PPP and policy. For example, in August 2012, after HH made his initial decree, several policy owners and PECs expressed that they were unable to decide what format to use to prepare their policy proposals. Based on previous experience at the ADP, the Strategy Department suggested similar templates for policy documents, which would allow for policy summaries, risk assessments, and general development and implementation requirements.

Double-loop learning also occurred in the process of taking lessons learned from policy development in the ADP and applying them to the MOI. Double-loop learning moves past the direct physical or social causes of a mistake or problem, and directs the focus of thinking toward the underlying values or goals (Argyris and Schön 1996). As explained previously, leadership in the MOI decided that it wanted to use a case example from the ADP to better study how if the UAE PPP strategies were effective and to explore ways to ensure that PPP deployment at the federal-level MOI would result in implementable policy. The decision was made to allow the Strategy Department

to reflect on the efficacy of the use of force and rules of pursuit policies in the ADP.

Reflecting upon the ADP experience led the Strategy Department to conclude that the current plan of developing several concurrent and interdependent policies in vacuum, apart from each other, would not lead to success. This realisation - that the model of planning multiple policies simultaneously but independently, as if in silos of working groups constrained by hierarchy and unwilling to communicate with each other, was going to lead to failure - is an important example of double-loop learning within the MOI.

This double-loop of learning had immediate impact - the Strategy Department requested top management to reconsider their decision and give the accountability to strategic department to decide on scope of change rather than make it open to policy owner without clear direction. Thus, strategic department request all policy owner to review their policy proposal by filling out a new T1 (the standardised policy brief document), which moved past previous versions and was now built with a new view toward interdependence in mind. This would help the project liaison and that policy owner to define potential cross-functional policies and identify all potential stakeholders before policy proposals were brought before the PEC. This double-loop realisation that massive numbers of policies cannot be independently developed all at once also led to the Strategy Department's recommendation to cut the number of policies being developed. This recommendation was actualised with the PEC approving

twenty-two policies for development. Finally, the realisation that the entire approach to developing many concurrent policies was a faulty model to begin with led the MOI to expand the policy development period from one year (2013) to two years or more of development and implementation. In essence, the Strategy Department had to encourage policy owners to unlearn their approach (Fiol and O'Connor 2017; Tsang 2017; Reese 2018) to addressing HH's decree and backtrack to their overarching purpose: to create executable policy.

As 2013 ended and the team started deploying the plan to develop twenty-two policies, the Strategic Department started to explore the decision-making behind the decision to develop fewer policies. There was a realisation that the mindset behind the learning process was flawed - by drawing lessons about policy development from the Emirate-level ADP, the team had not thought about how these lessons would apply to a larger body such as the MOI, with many more stakeholders. In the ADP, many stakeholders are overlapping; as will be explained later, many leaders hold multiple positions because of nepotism, and there is a high degree of interdependencies (Wagner and Hollenback 2014) between policies and their owners. But at the federal-level positions, resources, and challenges are all spread further apart.

Thus, the Strategy Department concluded that choosing twenty-two policies does not only depend upon the issue that is nominated by policy owners but also requires a holistic understanding of the full picture of the organisation and its needs. The department recommended earlier discussion with

stakeholders, rather than dependence on policy owner analysis: this kind of bottom-up approach is a radical departure from the approaches to learning and knowledge that underpin all Emirati public servant understanding. The Strategy Department also introduced the new notion that cross-referencing and interdependent policies should be developed in conjunction, to avoid gaps and waste. This is the triple-loop of learning (Wang and Ahmed 2003) - going back to reimagine what policy development should be or what PPP should mean within a command and control but cross-referencing federal-level organisation.

An evidence-based example of this triple-loop learning may illustrate. Six policies were initially proposed which all related generally to prevention and protection; two (the Crime Reporting policy and the Drug Prevention and Protection policy) passed PEC assessment and received approval to move on to the consultation stage (4) of Emirati PPP. Other policies, such as the Crime Prevention and Protection policy and the Child Protection policy, did not pass PEC assessment.

During the consultation stage of the actual policy development, however, it became clear that many of the real world challenges which had inspired the failed prevention and protection policy proposals were still very relevant to stakeholders, many of whom were stakeholders in all the policies of prevention and protection that had been proposed, including those that had been rejected. This made new selected policies difficult to draft unless the MOI could reassess and consult with policy owners and stakeholders of the refused policies.

| | |
|---|---|
| Single-loop Learning | Challenges faced in the PPP experience are addressed within the paradigm of the command and control UAE public administration. |
| Double-loop Learning | Based on ADP experiences, Strategy Department recommends a completely new mindset when approaching the development of many policies, concurrently, across many departments: appreciating interdependencies and encouraging collaboration across policies to share knowledge and experience. |
| Triple-loop Learning | Strategy Department determines that developing many policies benefits from intentionally planning how policies will cross-reference to cover all organisational gaps, recognising that this approach requires a dramatic shift to adopt bottom-up collaboration with stakeholders. |

**Table 6: Single-, Double-, and Triple-Loops of Learning in MOI 2013-2015**

It becomes clear that the recommendation to cut down the number of policies ignored what would happen to the interests of the policies that were not selected when taking into account the interdependence understanding between processes. Delays and incomplete communication and planning was the result. The author and other members of the Strategy Department learned that the lessons learned from the ADP - to reduce the number of policies developed while using the Strategy Department to manage cross-referential issues - needed to be modified before being applied to a larger, federal-level organisation such as the MOI. A summary of the lessons learned at each level of learning in this thesis is found below in Table 6.

The lessons learned at the federal-level about how to incorporate lessons learned at the Emirate-level provide insight on how to better utilise case examples and pilot projects to improve Emirati public administration in the future. In summary, the triple-loop learning accomplished by the Strategy

Department and others in the MOI will inform future policy development; this thesis demonstrates a case example of triple-loop learning occurring in real time in the Global South.

Beyond the theory of triple-loop learning (Bateson 2002; Wang and Ahmed 2003), the author was looking for other theoretical frameworks to explain the OL she observed in her thesis reflections. However, the learning organisation theories that have grown in popularity in the West (Senge 1990; Easterby-Smith 1997) are not well applicable to the UAE. Both the ADP and the MOI offer training programs, team learning activities, and other opportunities for policy development teams and individuals to improve their organisational knowledge. Alternatively, the author found, and will discuss throughout this chapter, that providing opportunities for stakeholders to become educated about policy needs and potential roles in PPP development before the PPP began was beneficial for PPP success. Thus, it might be easy to assume that there were sufficient elements of the learning organisation present in either the MOI or the ADP to categorise the organisations as learning organisations.

However, as with other Western theories discussed in this thesis, trying to apply the notion of the learning organisation to public administration in the Global South example of the UAE falls short because of disconnects with Emirati culture (Siddique 2017). If one takes Senge's (1990) argument to his extreme, an organisation must possess all five of the below characteristics to fit the learning organisational theoretical framework; like many organisations (Gino

and Staats 2015), both the MOI and the ADP fall so far short as to definitively settle the point. Still, there is value the knowledge about OL in the UAE that can be gained only by reflecting on why the MOI and ADP are not learning organisations. While some of literature on OL in the Global South has turned toward the learning organisation (Dirani 2009; Gino and Staats 2015), this thesis provides a case example where such a model fails, and alternative perspectives on OL are still necessary to provide frameworks best suited to the evidence gathered from experiences in the Global South.

One of the reasons that a reader may presume, incorrectly, that the MOI or ADP are learning organisations is that they operate utilising systemic thinking (Easterby-Smith and Araujo 2001; Senge 1990), which serves as the foundation for any educational or training programming within the departments and ministry. The process of breaking down stakeholders into policy teams and promoting communication between them allowed the ADP and MOI to maintain bounded systems and facilitate PPP development.

This does mean that there was significant emphasis on team learning (Örtenblad 2013, 2018), particularly in relation to training stakeholders to be better engaged with PPP development. For example, on-the-job training sessions were held to instruct policy owners how to fill out PDF documentation in the hopes that these skills would be carried into future policy development. These sessions also taught employees how to gather feedback from others, avoid contradictions with existing laws, and engage with other stakeholders.

These learning sessions were not only focused on policy specifics, but on training staff members with multi-functional policy development skills.

The MOI has made efforts to promote personal mastery (Rademakers 2014) of the skills necessary for PPP implementation, development, and planning. In 2015, the MOI sought to improve individual skills in policy development for the policy section team by sending them to study for diplomas in the UK. However, in many cases, this is less of a case of the promotion of personal mastery and more of a situation where well-positioned individuals are given the benefit of UK study because of nepotism (Ar: *wasta*). As a result, many of the trained individuals who come back are not correctly positioned within the MOI to use the skills taught. In many cases, the individuals sent for additional training do not actually have the capacity or passion, and so return from training with few if any skills. Thus, it is unclear whether the MOI is truly encouraging personal mastery of policy development skills, or if it is simply reinforcing its own social order through nepotistic rewards.

But unfortunately, because the ADP and the MOI lacked a clear consensus about policy planning procedures, they lacked the kinds of mental models (Argyris 1999) needed, and struggled to make more. These mental models, characterised as part of the triple-loop learning (Bateson 2002; Wang and Ahmed 2003) discussed earlier in this chapter, failed to develop in the MOI or ADP during the period of research, discouraging any notion of mastering a shared ‘way of making policy’ that had been a goal of the original PPP efforts

starting in 2012. The lack of shared mental models was largely due to the inability for stakeholders to agree about the value of organisational knowledge, pre-planning, or shared perspectives. The unwillingness of some stakeholders to commit to rigorous policy development efforts meant that a shared vision, which serves as a basis for all learning organisations, failed to develop.

This concept of the shared vision becomes relevant in the case of the MOI and the ADP because there was a declared goal of the MOI to learn from the ADP experience of the PPP development for the use of force and rules of pursuit policies. Yet there was no shared vision as to the goal of this learning - to improve MOI understanding of PPP development (and thus engage in triple-loop learning by reflecting on PPP thinking), to create executable policy, or to learn how to create PPP proposals that would most readily please higher-level ministers. Without a shared vision of the purpose of organisational or interorganisational learning (Crossan et al. 1995; Tucker et al. 2007; Fortis et al. 2016), the MOI and ADP lack the shared desire to use knowledge and improve the PPP experience. The lack of long-term shared vision (Easterby-Smith et al. 2000) about producing quality PPP proposals is, unsurprisingly, one of the main reasons for the inability of the MOI committees to produce ninety quality proposals as per their mandate.

This discussion of the learning organisation, versus OL, is relevant in that it draws particular attention to the problems caused when organisational leadership emphasises the importance of learning to development new

processes but does not foster clear shared visions of successful execution of goals (McHugh et al. 1998). Had the MOI, ADP, or external consultants created a shared vision of policy execution success, rather than competing visions of what constituted PPP success, PPP development might have progressed faster.

Yet the fact that this failure of shared vision automatically disqualifies the MOI or ADP from being considered learning organisations by Senge's (1990) and most subsequent definitions of learning organisation demonstrates the difficulty in applying Western theories to the Global South cases. It is very likely that what constitutes an organisation-wide drive toward personal mastery, shared visions, or mental models looks very different in a command and control style organisation (Baldwin and Cave 1999) with a strong drive to please the royal family. Subsequent OL research with redefines the learning organisation in a Global South context could provide insight into this issue further.

Thus, while there is a small body of literature (for example Dirani 2009; Khadra and Rawabdeh 2006) that attempts to classify Global South public administrations or corporations as learning organisations, this thesis will not join that movement. In many ways, the triple-loop learning conducted in her role as adviser in the Strategy Department allowed the author to observe that, while MOI leadership may promote some aspects of the learning organisation mentality, this is more likely done as a larger part of modernisation and maintaining the appearance of a more Westernised administrative program (Salem and Jarrar 2012; Okoth 2015; Mansour 2017). The largest obstacles to

be a learning organisation - the use of nepotism instead of personal mastery, and the inability to create a shared vision that resonates beyond “please those above you” - are both cultural issues, deeply ingrained in the Emirates’ patron-client conception of hierarchy. These, and other theoretical cultural issues related to the UAE are not describing, providing insight for those outside of the Global South seeking to understand how Emirati conceptions of order shape PPP deployment and NPM implementation.

### 7.1.4 Theoretical Reflections on the UAE

In examining her reflective memos while engaged in her meta-analysis, the author was struck by the fact that it is impossible to remove the data generated from the context of the UAE, particularly at the federal level. Certain core characteristics of Emirati society that were discussed in Chapter Two, including the client-patron mindset which frames all Emirati social interaction and governance (Suliman 2006; Okoth 2015; Mansour 2017), were extremely relevant in the author’s experiences during this thesis research.

The client-patron model which serves as the foundation of Emirati political and economic order is predicated on the idea of knowing who provides favors and assistance to whom in exchange for loyalty and obedience. As such, those within the system seek to curry favor with central authority. These ideas stand outside of NPM and other modernising approaches which emphasise decentralisation, efficiency, and transparency. Yet, regardless of the uneven

application of NPM principles in the UAE (Mansour 2017) in the last decade, the desire to please the royal family, including ministers, remains strong, especially among Emirati citizens.

This reality became a very central concern for the author in this thesis because of the way that PPP development struggled in 2013 across the MOI. When the ADP was tasked with developing use of force and rules of pursuit policies in 2012, these policies were part of a policy window - by creating these policies in response to a public need, stakeholders were seeking effective implementation of the policies. The assumption in taking lessons from the ADP experience and applying them to the larger MOI experience of PPP development was based on the idea that MOI policy owners were also focused on creating policy that fulfilled societal need.

During the 2013 MOI PPP planning process, it became very clear to the author and other members of the Strategic Department that many of the policy owners across several of the MOI committees were more interested in fulfilling the requirements of HH's 2012 decree asking for two policies per committee than they were in drafting PPP that would lead to successful policy development and implementation. These policy owners only want to develop policy as per HH - and as fast as they can in order to gain praise - and the result was a decline in stakeholder effort. Once it became clear that many committees were not actually focused on developing the PPP necessary to create executable policy, their PPP development stopped. This is why only twenty-five PPPs were evaluated

by PECs (of which only twenty-two passed).

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** Many policy owners were aware and admitted that they were producing policy proposals solely to appease HH's decree. In late 2012, a policy owner in the Immigration Department commented to me that "*when the policy mandate is issued, immediately we proposed two policy names based on our experience with our core functions that we worked on... not because we understood the critical needs of our organisation*." He went on to explain to me that many other committees had similar thinking: propose two policy names as quickly as possible and expect to change focus later, if necessary. In many cases, policy proposals were never backed by needs, expectations, or ideas, but the hope was that this fact was very hard to see from the position of HH and MOI top leadership.

In addition, as is discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the desire to please the royal family translated into a desire to please the Strategy Department, because of its location in the political hierarchy of the MOI. However, this also translated into an unwillingness to share information or admit to challenges or struggles - even to the point of committees failing to complete or submit T1 documentation - because policy owners did not want to show weakness or inability to the Strategy Department. This often meant that the PEC would meet regarding policy suggestions, only to find that little documentation was available for review, largely because teams did not want to reveal problems. This effort to avoid shame or embarrassment from the top MOI leadership heavily influenced policy owners' behaviors.

While the UAE's economy has developed differently than the other petro economies of the Gulf (Okoth 2015; Mansour 2017), the motivation of pleasing the royal family just as powerful in the Emirates as it is in other Gulf public administrations. In many cases, policy owners were more interested in seeking praise from the top than sharing success with those laterally positioned within

the ministry.

There were other ways that positionality became important in the organisation and operation of policy units and teams. Being an adviser in the UAE public sector helped the author to understand that success with almost any project required attention to position and the proper use of one's social influence within command and control organisations (such as the ADP and MOI). This included reflection on the nature of nepotism (Ar: *wasta*) within command and control organisations (Baldwin and Cave 1999) such as the MOI/ADP that are undergoing NPM implementation.

Nepotism exists in the Emirati public administration, in part, because many people are listed as affiliated with projects and most officials are expected to hold multiple roles. The author herself was required to reflect on her multiple roles within the Emirati public administration, serving as a Strategic Adviser for both the federal-level MOI and Emirate-level ADP. As will be discussed later in this chapter, many members of the Strategy Department, including the author, struggled to differentiate their roles or adequately share knowledge to appropriate stakeholders.

Neither the author, nor her teammates at the Strategic Department, were alone in holding multiple roles at both the federal and Emirate-level of UAE's public administration. In fact, most ADP and MOI officers have multiple roles that are assigned to them in addition to their primary daily job. These assignments, such as being a part of development project, performing security mission, or

share a responsibility in committee make them important and well connected within organisations that have over 36,000 or 72,000 (ADP and MOI, respectively) employees.

Through reflection, the author was able to observe that many policy officers were assigned to projects or became attached to projects primarily because of their social connections or relatives, rather than any expected contribution or relevant input. NPM principles of meritocratic competition and incentivisation (Goldfinch 2009: 2) would seem to be opposed to what can be most simply described as nepotism.

However, as a participant in both the MOI and ADP, the author acknowledges that there are benefits, even within an NPM framework, to nepotistic appointments across multiple levels of public administration. Having largely symbolic, well-connected policy officers was beneficial for MOI committees because the established connections between teams led by the same figureheads, allowing those teams to develop cross-functional policy and build coalitions to affect change. In addition, the Strategy Department often found committees could utilise symbolic figurehead's connections to facilitate the execution of change, even if the officer was not part of change itself, by using his social position and status to motivate cooperation and consensus. Attaching a well-connected figure high in the social hierarchy increases stakeholder engagement with that department's efforts; this may be especially important for policy efforts which rely on input from a number of interdependent units or

committees. Practical examples of this use of influence and soft power are discussed later in this chapter's section on empirical findings.

Thus, as a researcher, the author acknowledges that there is legitimate philosophical merit to accepting some degree of nepotism as promoting collaboration and cooperation, even if this form of centralisation of power can be misused for personal benefit. A well-connected officer is worth having attached to any PPP development project in a command and control style public administration because of the cooperation he can motivate, both within his own organisation and from those in other organisations. Even if these largely-symbolic officers' only contribution is to increase awareness and attention to policy goals, it is possible within NPM's paradigm of outsourcing to simply hire an exterior consultant to actually execute the responsibilities formally assigned to the well-position officer.

In conclusion, the author found that it was not uncommon within the command and control governmental structure (Baldwin and Cave 1999) of the UAE's public administration to find officers juggling multiple roles, and leadership positions being held by symbolically important but largely disengaged figures whose social position was more relevant than their skill set. The author argues, however, that there is a value, even within the paradigm of NPM, for this kind of nepotistic staffing: since actual execution can be outsourced to consultants anyway, the interest, attention, and potential collaboration brought by well-connected figures is valuable for keeping stakeholders engaged in

complex and challenging PPP development. Combining nepotism with a desire to please HH and those connected with him demonstrates the Emirati approach to decentralisation and other NPM principles is uneven; this marks another contrast between what is expected to be (theory) and what occurs in reality (data generated in the Global South).

## 7.2 Empirical and Practical Findings

In addition to theoretical findings which allow the author to address some of the gaps in literature, the author's data and reflections also provided some empirical findings and recommendations. As an adviser in the Strategy Department, the author's position within her organisations was to advise and create recommendations regarding policy development and PPP implementation, giving her the opportunity to explore practical recommendations that can be used elsewhere in the UAE, or in other command and control public administrations that are experiencing rapid change and OL. Reflection and exploration of the data generated over the course of several years of research illuminated some core themes related to PPP development, both at the philosophical and practical levels, which were not heavily addressed in literature.

### 7.2.1 Practical Approaches to PPP

Because many of the departments and committees within the Emirati public administration lack the rigorous PPP necessary to develop and implement

massive numbers of effective policies, the MOI needed to improve their PPP strategies before proposing and developing policies for the MOI top leadership. The Strategy Department oversaw this process in 2013 and 2014, learning important lessons about PPP development that allowed for the creation of twenty-two policies. One of the most important practical lessons which is broadly applicable far beyond the Emirati case is that policy developers should be extremely flexible with the five stages of PPP, rather than adhering to the form over the function of each stage.

#### 7.2.1.1 Flexibility in the Need Analysis Stage

In her role as an adviser in the Strategy Department, the author found that, in certain cases, it is possible to start drafting policy (stage 2) based on best practices, and not based to analysis (stage 1). In her reflections as an inside action researcher, the author found that policies which were heavily modeled after international rules and practices were best suited for skipping the analysis stage and drafting policy based on international best practices.

As an example, from February to May 2014, the MOI sought to develop several core functional/operational immigration and border policies related to airport security, visitors' visas, 'In-and-Out' sea passengers, and 'In-and-Out' airport passengers. Instead of analyzing the immigration situation of the UAE, the SMEs charged with drafting these immigration and border policies decided to draw from preexisting best practices from abroad. Both of the SMEs involved were British expatriates, and so drafted these policies based on existing UK

policies. The first drafts of these policies were sent to the policy owners for initial input; they pointed to places where minor changes were necessary regarding governance framework and stakeholders' roles and responsibilities within the specifically Emirati context. Later, the policy owner and SMEs met to map the first draft of the T2, which was more directly oriented toward UAE challenges.

Hence, using international standards of best practice in place of the analysis stage to develop a first draft of policies was effective. These policies were developed without early engagement with either the policy owner or stakeholders, which can be beneficial when launching PPP with very busy policy owners and stakeholders. In summary, with policies that depend heavily on international rules and regulations, it is possible to base policies on international best practice provided by SMEs and then hone specific details in later consultation, approval, and implementation steps.

#### 7.2.1.2 Flexibility in the Drafting Stage

While academics writing about policy development may discuss the drafting stage as a clear-cut and well-organised step in the PPP cycle (see Bovens et al. 2001; Thomas 2001; Knoepfel and Weider 2007; or Howlett et al. 2009 as examples), actual policy writers would never agree that the process is neat or clean (Birkland 2015). In practice, the drafting stage of PPP is actually a stuttering mess of different efforts, with some policies being more complex than others. As such, some policies require multiple sessions of drafting and

consultation. This may seem obvious, but when many stakeholders were looking to ‘check boxes’ and thus acted as though one round of drafting was sufficient, it is worth noting that flexibility and willingness to expand the drafting stage is necessary for successful policy development, especially with cross-functional policies with many stakeholders.

For example, developing the MOI’s federal-level Response Policy, which was a strategic and operational policy that impacted many stakeholders, required multiple consultation sessions to manage drafting in 2014. The policy itself is cross-functional and has engaged many stakeholders, both departments and committees, across the seven Emirates (for example, the rescue and emergency department, air wing, control room, traffic department, police stations, etc.) It also engages external parties (stakeholders) such as the Emergency and Crisis authority, Health authority, etc. Therefore, the General Director of the Strategic Management directorate was invited to join this first consultation session to encourage commitment from other stakeholders. Its aim was to let the policy owner (the response committee) and the policy stakeholders discuss the first draft of the policy (T2).

This response policy consultation workshop was one of the biggest workshops organised by the policy section teams in the entire policy project. More than a hundred officers from different Emirates attended. The policy owner discussed the policy objectives, challenges, aims and spoke generally about the aims of the workshop: to consult interested parties about the draft, verify

understanding of the main implementation requirements and tackle any new challenges or points of conflict between stakeholders. However, the author recommended that more than one workshop would suit this policy better, because compiling an implementation plan needs detailed discussion with each stakeholder. With so many stakeholders, the consultation workshop was focused on hearing the concerns of all the stakeholders, but not discussing solutions that could be turned into policy that could be implemented. Discussing problems and issues will make the policy achievable, but the aim is to list not merely the challenges but ways of coping with them.

#### 7.2.1.3 Flexibility in the PEC Assessment Stage

The author also found that flexibility was extremely important for the PEC assessment stage of PPP, and the willingness to make adjustments to the process of assessment allowed for more successful development of PPP that could result in executable policy. Flexibility at this stage of PPP was crucial in the case of this thesis research. During the MOI's efforts in 2013 to develop strong PPP, several proposed drafts were reviewed by the PECs after the policy owner had completed the policy brief (T1) but before significant work on the policy draft (T2) had begun, as the focus was on developing the PPP rather than developing the executable policy itself.

However, most of the PECs' questions during these evaluations were related to matters of the policy draft (T2); since that document had not yet been

addressed, the approval process had to be delayed. As more policies were approved and resources allocated, the more competitive the PEC-approval process became; thus, policy units which had been flexible during the approval stage and began work on their T2s were better prepared to provide the details requested by PECs and gain approval.

#### 7.2.1.4 Flexibility in the Consultation Stage

While the consultation stage of PPP development is important, it is not applicable to all policies, and so those developing policies must be able to evaluate each stage of PPP individually and make a determination as to the necessity of the consultation stage. This is particularly important because, in the UAE for example, it is necessary to weigh the need for consultation across many departments for cross-referential policies against the common complaint that too much input was required. Active evaluation, rather than rote following of the stages of PPP.

A clear example of a policy which did not require a consultation stage occurred in late 2014 when a policy owner for a business continuity policy requested policy section teams wave the consultation stage of PPP for his policy. Because his policy consisted of ensuring compliance with requirements for the business continuity system ISO, discussion or consultation was unnecessary: ISO standards had to be met in order for the policy owner's department will not grant the certificate of compliance.

As the adviser, the author recommended re-scaling the PPP for this

policy by completing the T2, and then replacing the consultation stage with a policy communication session with stakeholders. Stage 5 (approval and implementation) proceeded without change since the policy was part of a larger ISO system implementation plan. Thus, the consultation stage, it could be argued, is important unless it is unnecessary; direct assessment and flexibility allow PPP developers to determine the need for the consultation stage while ensuring policy quality is maintained.

#### 7.2.1.5 Flexibility in the Approval for Implementation Stage

Finally, even though all policy requires approval for implementation, there is policy for which taking the actual effort to gain approval is unnecessary because there is little change to be approved. In many cases, policies which are developed for implementation are broad, being designed to ensure the fulfillment of known values or the enforcement of accepted regulations.

For example, in 2014, the author worked with policy owners developing policies which ensured the ADP and MOI would comply with a particular UN anti-corruption convention. There was no need to conduct heavy consultation sessions, nor was HH or the Policy Council required to give approval to implement the policy - the policy was approved automatically by the government's adherence to the UN convention. Or, for example, policies written to comply with government requirements to celebrate innovation or productivity - these policies do not actually change action or require budgets.

In most cases, policies which fall into the category of flexible approval are ones which promote broad actions or conduct, and thus affect all MOI employees, not a limited number of interested stakeholders. These policies are usually related to codes of conduct or general guidance. These policies usually require information and communication sessions rather than training and action, and are more management and HR oriented. Thus, once the PEC approves the policy proposal for these kinds of policies, they can be planned and implemented without additional input or approval.

In conclusion, the author strongly recommends that any PPP developer approach the process with a mindset of flexibility and adaptability. Flexibility is a key enabler for PPP. It allows staff to transfer activities that are policy-specific from stage to stage, forwards or backwards. In addition, much depends on the type and complexity of the policy. Flexibility in a PPP flows from the overlapping of different stages and the willingness to delay certain parts of planning or collaboration until the policy is better developed.

#### 7.2.1.6 Language in PPP Documentation

There are also some practical factors that affect how policy is planned and developed in command and control organisations (Baldwin and Cave 1999) that can be further elucidated with data generated in this research. The first, which has relevance in the UAE but also beyond to other client-patron style public administrations, is the care that must be taken in the type of language that is used in policy development in command and control organisations. Policy

planners should be aware of the type of language used in policy in command and control organisations, and pay attention to the ways that language shapes policy.

When applying new public management principles to the Global South, new lexicons of business language were introduced into the largely legislative discourse of many developing public administrations (Kamarck 2000; da Cunha Rezende 2008). Yet no other examples of PPP-focused or NPM scholarship examining the Global South discuss the role of language in the way that new policies are written. In the course of her research, the author found that one of the overarching questions which appeared several times during Stage Two (drafting of policy) of PPP development was “should we be using business terms or use the language of regulations that the stakeholders are already familiar with?”

More importantly, practical, on-the-ground observation and reflection allowed the author to notice several occasions where disconnect over the types of language used in the MOI and ADP affected PPP development. For example, in 2014, it was observed during the writing of the crime recording policy that the scope of the policy significantly influenced the language, and even the construction of sentences, used in policy drafts. Certain words created problems for stakeholders (such as “shall” and “accountable”) because these words did not create sufficient ambiguity in meaning for those trying to implement the policies. Often, vague language was intentionally used to ensure that

stakeholders were comfortable.

This was a theme that appeared often in the author's reflections - the idea of deliberately ambiguous or vague language being used in documentation. When drafting a Crime Recording Policy, the author was told by a SME, "Policy should not include any statements that could cause implementation resistance, or challenge points, since challenges and implementation requirements will be revisited at the stages of policy implementation and policy revision." It was generally understood that policy implementation requirements were not documented in the policy documentation itself, but discussed and planned during the implementation stage or earlier. Otherwise, the policy owner may find it hard to reach consensus with the parties concerned during the formulation stage. External consultants were also told, for example while drafting governance framework documentation, to be deliberately vague about stakeholders' responsibilities to ensure easy acceptance of the framework.

The author also believes that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of organisational mandate, role, and position in determining the language used in policy development. The ADP, as a policing organisation, is automatically associated with justice and equality, and has a public mandate to always operate under rules of order and justice. Similarly, the MOI's mission to promote security, equality, and stability for all Emirates means that any policy it produces must be presented in language of justice and equality. This often meant that stakeholders requested changes in policy language to ensure a more

flexible, neutral, and fair approach to public administration. Theorists exploring PPP development could pay more attention to the role of organisational positioning in PPP language choice.

Based on some of the real world language challenges observed by the author during the course of research, it should not be taken for granted that care with language is a guarantee for those developing PPP within a clearly command and control based organisation. The way language was used to be deliberately vague, flexible, fair, and collaborative shaped how policy was constructed; therefore, language affected PPP for many policies. More attention could be paid to this reality in subsequent research.

#### 7.2.1.7 Governance Framework (GF) Documentation Challenges

The author's research illuminated the role of governance framework (GF) documentation (Worren 2012), not only within the context of the MOI and ADP, but within the larger practical application of PPP theory. GF documentation are the materials used in the MOI to guide policy development; in this sense, they are the policies for policy development. Having strong GF documentation would allow the Strategy Department to support the various committees in their efforts to develop quality, executable policy. GF documentation that matches organisational culture is important to PPP success because it translates stakeholder learning and engagement into the roles and responsibilities that are necessary to facilitate the relationships that ensure policy delivery, and does so

in a way stakeholders can understand. As stated earlier, many scholars (Scherr 1993; Slywotzky 1999; Worren 2012) argue that governance frameworks (GFs) with strong role definition and the listing of specific interdependencies are the best way to manage commitment interdependence within public administrations. The MOI's framework seemed to demonstrate the opposite - overly specific definitions of roles were a problem in developing the GF, and direct language needed to be replaced with more vague language. In the case of this thesis, it was important that external consultants created GF documentation that fell in line with the mandates of command and control public administration, not NPM principles, because NPM principles have been so unevenly applied to the UAE.

The external consultants who were brought into the policy process in 2013 were charged with writing the GF documentation for the MOI, a process that took significantly longer than expected. The consultants and policy section teams worked together for nearly nine months, from January to September of 2013, to develop the four drafts that would eventually result in the final GF documentation. This indicates how it is difficult to produce GF documentations that aims to defined roles and responsibilities of involved stakeholders and explain their relationship while considering their influential power and main functions.

The first draft of the GF documentation was issued in late 2012, and the first meeting of consultants and team members was in mid-January 2013. The GF documentation outline included governance structure, the authority matrix,

roles and responsibilities, PPP framework. In her role as participant adviser, the author noted that the GF first draft seemed to have good structure but not much valuable content. It was clear after reading the first draft of the GF documentation that the external consultants did not understand the relationship between the federal-level and Emirate-levels of government, nor did they understand the various scopes of power, relationships, or hierarchies that organise these public servants. It seems policy section teams and consultant NOT realise the complexity of the GF scope which include multi level i.e. GF to ensure PPP implementation in federal and local level, GF to manage policy project and GF is required to manage policy delivery projects.

When team reviewed roles and responsibilities section it was too detailed and narrative. Stakeholder responsibilities were clearly articulated in a way that would hold them more accountable than many would feel comfortable with in a command and control style of government (Baldwin and Cave 1999). The external consultants' expectations - that the MOI was seeking to use more NPM principles of transparency, accountability, and decentralisation - showed that they did not fully understand how policy making operates in the UAE. It seems that the benefits of detailed roles and responsibilities for each policy stage and type are clear as result of appreciating NPM practices. However, given the current organisation context and management system, which depend on command-and-control, power and rank are extremely influential on processes and practices. Policy owners who form "higher committees" of higher-ranking

members have their own ways of carrying out their assignments. Restricting roles might prevent stakeholders from having an enhanced response, commitment, internal competition.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** While discussing the first draft of the GF documentation in early 2013, a policy section team member said,

"I am quite sure that nobody will read or understand these detailed descriptions about roles, nor will stakeholders accept our advice on how they should perform or behave in their tasks. They would prefer a general explanation about the main activities for each stage along with some guidance – this would be much more appropriate."

The consultant insisted on the need for detailed description and said, "This would leave no room for questions or excuses by stakeholders".

As adviser, I stopped consultant and said "this was not the way to deal with our stakeholders. We are working in a command-and-control organisation and this way is not appropriate if we want their buy-in. We have rank and power which should handle issues by agreement and soft-push horizontal and vertical power."

Upon later reflection, I realised that these comments may have been antithetical to the principles of NPM. They were, however, necessary to help the external consultants understand the proper scope of the GF documentation.

After these meetings, the second draft of the GF document was submitted, which took into account both the feedback from the consultations, as well as the knowledge which had already been gained by examining policy deployments. First and foremost, the policy section team's concerns about length and detail were addressed. The policy team members were *"...happy to have 26 pages [first version] decreased to 5 pages. Now it is focused on the point and easy to communicate to policy stakeholders."* But lessons from the policy development that was already occurring in the MOI were also taken into account; for example, some roles were reconfigured or expanded based on challenges overcome by committees already working on their policy proposals. This change in roles to fit missing project function within PPP and align with

current organisation context, due to learning lessons from the deployment of the process. By this point, it was becoming clearer that the governance framework depended on what stakeholders were learning in the deployment of PPP, even while the GF documentation was still under construction.

In June 2013, the external consultants submitted their third version of the governance documentation, with a note that they were *"sure this time we comply with the revision notes sent and discussed in March and April 2013."* Document analysis of this third draft revealed that it was not dramatically different than the second one, except for the addition of requirements for "support" and "accountability" within the RACI section of the authority matrix. While the policy section manager said that the authority matrix had become clearer, what "support" and "accountable" meant to the stakeholders was still puzzling.

As adviser, the author encourages the consultants to remove language regarding support and accountability if the terms were not clearly defined, and to instead just rely on standard RACI matrices. The external consultants again pushed back against the organisational culture of the MOI, arguing that *"we are simply making this authority matrix to speak to people and use organisational language based in our 6 months experience."* As an adviser, the author said *"yes, but the stakeholders are high-level people and they want clear lines on when to take action and make decisions. I believe this is still vague."* The external consultant was overly eager to close the GF documentation process, and thus was not absorbing how organisational culture and learning should have

been affecting the GF documentation drafting process.

Because of the inability of the external consultant to fully comprehend the way that deliberate ambiguity operates in the UAE, the Strategy Department required a fourth draft of the deliverables to ensure that the GF documentation worked for all stakeholders and articulated all the roles and responsibilities just enough to promote strong relationships among all team members working on policies. The GF documentation fourth draft submitted in September 2013 included a short description of the policy section's work, a diagram of PPP, the governance framework and the main and high-level roles and responsibilities on the current stakeholder list. It did not include a detailed discussion on the main role of many stakeholders, but still provided the support for implementing the policy framework effectively.

The author, in her role as adviser, recommended that stakeholders accept that new GF documentation by deploying its PPP framework as their business-as-usual approach to policy development. This was because, as the description of its evolution showed, the final draft of the GF documentation was simple, defined roles and responsibilities to stakeholders in a clear and concise manner, communicated the holistic understanding of PPP process rather than providing too many details, and would ensure effective implementation of policy. By tailoring GF documentation to organisational culture, the Strategy Department was able to ensure that stakeholders were engaged and understood their roles and responsibilities, while also creating a framework that would

support complex policy development and implementation.

#### 7.2.1.8 Standard Templates for Improved Communication

Beyond the importance of governance framework documentation, the author's research also illuminated documents at the intersection of several themes of this thesis, recommending standardised policy templates that are designed before PPP planning or development begins. Developing PPP is a complex process, as is the implementation of effective and efficient policy. Based on the author's decade of work within the ADP and MOI establishing quality and excellence management systems, and based on the reflections gathered for this thesis, the author recommends that PPP development should always be preceded by the formulation of standardised policy templates (see Hood 1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Liddle 2017). These standardised policy templates serve to support policy owners and relevant stakeholders in generating structured policy solutions, defining the scope of the implementation requirements from the standpoint of development, and minimising unwanted strategic and legal consequences.

The single greatest impediment to OL, NPM deployment, or even PPP development in public administrations is the fact that many employees either do not think to document their activities and decision-making, or do not want to document these actions. The author found this to be the case among policy developers in both the MOI and ADP, though there is no evidence that this

characteristic is specifically endemic to the Emirates or context.

Within the client-patron command and control system of the Emirates, however, it becomes clear that at least some of the motivation for the lack of documentation stems from the need to leave minimal evidence about their work so not to be questioned in any things went wrong, In this command and control organisation accountability and competition to get prompted for second rank is high, therefore in Emirati culture employees keep minimal evidence of work to play safe. Top management who sure passed through this line of thinking, aimed to improve this culture and make it more interactive and informative for external and internal parties In purpose to encourage the transparency, though enforcing employee to document as part of ISO system requirements.

Still, documentation is a very effective tool to engage employee and revel their performance since it is knowledge evidence-based to enhance better focus on challenges to improve processes. Documentation also offers risks and rewards to organisational staff. Any missing in information will cause non-conformity then accordingly impact their ISO system certification maintenance which could cause highly management embarrassed if it is not renewed by auditing bodies. Documentation is even enforced by local and federal government through requesting public organisation to apply for excellence award which cannot be granted unless revel excellent documented evidences.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** It does not actually matter how much documentation is required of employees; asking them to do additional documentation will cause frustration and annoyance regardless of their current requirements. This point was very relevant in the MOI and ADP, where policy owners and stakeholders were required to submit minimal documentation before the development of the PPP documents in 2013; employees were so accustomed to skipping

documenting their actions that even minimum requirements received pushback by policy owners.

Using documentation to standardise policy, ensure clarity and consistency, and compare and evaluate material across many departments and levels requires uniformity of data and presentation. The easiest way to ensure that the materials submitted by committees, policy teams, or any other staff was uniform and therefore easy to assess and advise was to create templates that policy owners and others could fill in. Standardised templates help policy owners know what information is expected and help refine the communication and collaboration process. Accordingly, in this project 3 main documentation produced along with their guidance to ensure effective PPP deployment and to guide employee to focus their thinking about requirements.

- T1: template for studying the need for the policy
- T2: template for designing and proposing policy
- PDF: policy development file, including feedback of stakeholders, plan for implementation, and requirements for change

As a more specific example of the importance of pre-planned, standardised templates, it is worth briefly examining the PDF file, which helped drive policy consultation. This goal of the PDF is to simplify the policy formulation processes by providing a structured consultation approach to support policy owners in consulting policy stakeholders. It aimed to facilitate the smooth engagement and contribution of stakeholders to policy formulation and implementation. In addition, this document is considered evidence of

representing stakeholders' needs and requirements. It documents the direct and indirect impact of the policy on the organisation and is important for successful policy delivery and the quality of policy drafting. Completion of the PDF requirements is the responsibility of the policy owner and the policy section ensures compliance with the PPP. The PDF contains four main sections, as follows.

- Template for gathering stakeholder feedback responses to T2 policy draft
- Template for legal department to sign off on policy compliance with current laws and regulation
- Template for capability assessment for identifying scope of changes and requirements (capability assessment)
- Template for policy implementation plan developed in response to capability assessment

On reflection, the author recommends that to have an effective implementation plan, the policy owner should organise the implementation requirements and align them with reference to the various interests which affect them. These relationships should be understood before identifying the implementation requirements, to permit better verification and prioritisation of the scope of changes, along with the identification of the resources and skills requirements. Without preplanned, standardised templates like the PDF, the policy owner was seeking approval for policy ideas without clearly communicating his holistic understanding of the implementation requirements. Without a PDF, there would be a lack of a standardised capability assessment in policy development, which would impact negatively on the organisational context and resources.

Finally, it is recommended that policy owners should organise and follow up on findings drawn from the detailed feedback and notes collected in the policy development sessions to create their own standardised documentation as relevant for their specific policies. This might include, for example, establishing a matrix to document and map feedback and issues from their own stakeholders, documenting actions taken in clear reports, cataloging changes incorporated to policy drafts, and creating templates to inform stakeholders of the status of the policy development. By encouraging committees to also embrace standardised documentation, the Strategy Department was able to encourage NPM principles of knowledge sharing and collaboration.

#### 7.2.1.9 Bottom-Up Policy Development

As Hill (2013) argues, in policy development, it is important to balance top-down approaches with bottom-up approaches. However, many authors have argued (Salem & Jarrar 2012; Mansour 2017) that bottom-up approaches are not successful in many aspects of Emirati public administration. However, the author found that, even within command and control based public administrations (Baldwin and Cave 1999), there is space for bottom-up policy development. Comparing two examples of policies moved through PPP during 2013-2014 may provide insight into the ways that these different directions of collaboration and policy development operate within the Emirati public administration.

One successful policy owner who was developing his policy from August 2013 to March 2014 was planning and developing a set of connecting core functional policies (crime investigation, family violence, missing persons, and victim support). This policy owner of these policies was eager to construct them with reference to the challenges facing employees at the operational and tactical levels. Therefore, the policy owner did not start with examples of best practice which would be the usual organisational thinking, but instead embraced a bottom-up approach to studying the needs and challenges of on-the-ground stakeholders.

The policy owner did not want to look for the easiest and most direct issues to address. He wanted to focus on the worst problems that were truly affecting citizens and stakeholders alike, going from bottom upwards. The head of this committee said, "*these policies will be focused policies and a response to people's long-standing challenges. It is time to go in a different direction and develop on the basis of our needs*".

Accordingly, the policy owner and the policy liaison officer scheduled about three meetings with representatives from each Emirati to collect challenges from people working in the field on the above policies. All the sessions made an excellent contribution to understanding the challenges and provided effective suggestions. Furthermore, the policy owner used the experience of SMEs to provide best information to the PEC about the policy, supplementing his own data generated through his Emirati meetings. Using

SME assistance was a far better way to integrate the large amount of information gathered, and a more collaborative approach than drafting T2 alone. This improved the outcome of meetings, verifying, validating and customising best practice in its solutions.

This operational policy owner reversed the usual Emirati direction of policy development (from bottom to top) to develop customised policy solutions. The author saw this approach as very helpful because it allows better expectations of the policy outline and statements. It also minimised the pressure to reach consensus and get feedback during the consultation stage – 'moving ahead with clear vision'. Also the resulted lesson learned shows that down to top approach is limiting the domination of best practice solutions and constructed a solution of policy that fulfilled organisational need, while also embracing but not being led by best practice. More directly for the UAE, this bottom up approach also improve better understanding of the capabilities of each Emirate-level before going to develop Federal policy. In consequence, build policy solution that much realistic and has visible implementation plan to tackle operational challenges. Thus, some complex policy needs require a bottom up approach with massive data collection and stakeholder collaboration from the start.

In another case, mixing bottom-up feedback collection with top-down direction allowed for a large, operational level policy to be developed. In 2014, the Strategy Department worked with a policy owner developing a federal-level Response Policy, which was a strategic and operational policy that impacted

many stakeholders across policing, other emergency services, air control, and other departments. The policy owner wanted to draw his policy proposal ideas from feedback of stakeholders, but there was serious concern that many of the issues related to the policy would be visible on an international stage, and could be risky to the country's reputation.

As a compromise, the policy owner opted to hold a very large consultation session, with over a hundred operational officers from across all of the Emirates. This allowed input to help the policy team understand the problems that people face in the field. The policy owner prepared questions to encourage the discussion of challenges in the field. After the workshop ended, the policy team and the policy owner made minor changes to the response policy draft and kept a record of the workshop outcome (reports of all the detailed challenges, together with the feedback and actions incorporated in the policies) so as to reveal the complexity of the implementation plan in each Emirati in future stages. In this sense, a top-down approach oriented the federal-level policy, but this was supplemented by the lessons from stakeholder input that would then serve as a foundation for successful bottom-up policy development later at the Emirate-level.

At the core of the author's empirical findings about PPP is the concept of balance: balancing flexibility with each stage with the forward momentum to take a policy from concept to approval for implementation, balancing the language of accountability with the actual documentation which promotes accountability, and

balancing collaboration with efficiency in a staff more comfortable with command and control models than new public management principles. Each policy will move through its own cycle at its own pace; in many cases, the stuttering, delays, and setbacks faced by individual committees came from an inability to work with the Strategy Department to maintain all these axes of balance. In the case of the MOI and the UAE at large, even determining the right balance of accountability and hierarchy in the governance framework documentation was a challenge. Thus, the author recommends attention to the unique set of social relationships and interlocking compromises that will lead to balance in the policy process; it is easy for any organisation to introduce change or make new requirements with little attention to the rippling impact it will have on how those changes are enacted and those requirements met.

### 7.2.1 Practical Approaches to Managing Interdependencies

The single most common reflection throughout the author's data, from document analysis to reflective memoing, and most certainly in personal interactions, was that the policy making experience in the UAE is dominated by interdependencies. Nearly every policy proposed required stakeholders on multiple levels and in multiple places within the MOI to connect; many policies were delayed in stages 1 (studying the need) and 2 (drafting) precisely because the Strategy Department advisers, including the author, had to make policy owners aware of how many stakeholders would actually be involved if a

proposed policy were to be implemented.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** There were several memos in my collected data that included extreme frustration at how often very obvious interdependencies were ignored by stakeholders and policy owners. It was not usual for policies which were obviously cross-referencing multiple departments to have policy owners who did not seem aware that this meant that other departments would require consultation. External consultants, similarly, lacked awareness of interdependencies within the MOI. This lack of awareness seriously hampered the progress of many policies' development.

Sometimes a lack of understanding of the interdependencies inherent to the Emirates' internal government was a monumental setback for the Strategy Department. For example, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the external consultants brought in to write the governance framework (GF) for the MOI completely failed in their first draft in early 2013 because they did not realise that the GF had to address the needs of stakeholders at both the federal-level and the Emirate-level. Understanding that roles and responsibilities of Emirati public servants must always be articulated within the framework of both country and Emirate is an inherent acceptance of the interdependencies which heavily shape Emirati policy.

The author found that policy owners did not see how different level policies were interdependent. As a result, several of the ninety policies which were initially discussed in the MOI were actually overlapping, and could have been better served by a smaller number of better planned, interdependent policies. Ultimately, this is what the author and her Strategy Department proposed, but the process of accepting that many of the new policies would be interdependent took the majority of 2013 and set the development of

implementable policy back.

In fact, in order to encourage policy owners to consider interdependencies right from the beginning of the PPP cycle, the Strategy Department included requirements referencing interdependence patterns on all three of the major policy templates (T1, T2, PDF). In the T1 (template for studying the need for the policy), interdependence is outlined in implementation requirements section, which planned to be discussed at all stages of the policy development, not only the implementation stage. The T2 (template for proposing policy) included sections referencing interdependent stakeholders and departments to ensure awareness while designing policy. The PDF (policy development file) requested that policy owners define the scope of the changes proposed in their implementation and then list all stakeholders affected within that scope. As a consequence, the theory of interdependence (Thompson 1967; Wagner and Hollenback 2014) became an influential part of the intensive discussion at each stage, illuminating how interdependencies could impact the direction of policy development.

Finally, it became clear to the author that many public administrators within the MOI were unaware of their own positions within the ADP and MOI and the impact these multiple positions had on their ability to see policy interdependencies. Because many policy owners, stakeholders, and even members of the author's department (including the author herself) held positions simultaneously in the federal-level organisation (the MOI) and the Emirate-level

organisation (the ADP), they did not realise that they were giving input or making suggestions as members of both organisations, and often forgot that stakeholders from both levels would also want to be involved in decision-making.

The author thus recommends continual attention to interdependencies at the organisational and policy levels, especially the ways that organisational interdependencies can lead to policy interdependencies (Wagner and Hollenback 2014). It was necessary for the author, as an adviser in the Strategy Department, to continually remind MOI and ADP staff of their relationships within and between departments and committees, and their obligations to stakeholders at specific points in the UAE PPP cycle; integrating this attention into documents and training makes the effort easier. Attention to the relationships and expectations of one's staff is also necessary when injecting others into a series of heavily interdependent organisations, especially external consultants, who may have very different expectations, and may have no qualms in upsetting the balances which maintain harmony and success within the organisation.

### 7.2.3 NPM and the Challenge of External Support

One practical issue which was an unexpected challenge during PPP deployment in the MOI was difficulties with external consultant scope. While the outsourcing of services is common in the public administration of countries deploying NPM principles (Goldfinch 2009; Liddle 2017), that outsourcing process and experience is not always as effective as desired. A significant

practical finding of this thesis in regards to NPM is that there is the under-acknowledged challenge of determining the scope of support from external consultants or subject matter experts (SMEs). In other words, it is very easy to request or hire external, outsourced consulting with little idea of the actual needs, both in terms of time and expected contributions. As projects evolve in scope and duration, it can become even more difficult to access and keep track of consultant requirements when there was an incomplete understanding of consultant involvement from the start. The author was able to observe the challenge of determining consultant scope as both a participant in the Strategic Department of the MOI/ADP and through document analysis of consultant supporting documentation.

External consultant and SMEs are experts in their respective fields, which is why they are added onto teams as outsourced talent, but they also pose challenges to public sectors which are rapidly adopting NPM practices. As the author has observed in her position both in the ADP and in the MOI, external consultants who are brought in from overseas often face challenges adapting to Emirati governmental culture. As the clients purchasing consulting, UAE organisations need to estimate the effort, time and resources they put into managing and immersing the consultant in the organisation. Global South governmental administrations should not overestimate the expected contribution of SMEs who live in the UK (or elsewhere in the West) and thus have a very limited understanding regarding Global South regulations or culture. Hence, the

author recommends encouraging organisational employees to document implicit knowledge and record the reasoning behind decision making, since external consultants may not be familiar with the mindsets and perspectives inherent in the organisational and societal culture of the public administration.

Part of the reason that predicting the scope and involvement of external consultants and SMEs is so difficult is that these external participants are not stakeholders, but are instead driven by their own motivations and expert opinions. The consultant may forget that the client's objective is to receive work according to his own requirements, not the consultant's. As such, there can be conflict over requirements, deadlines, or deliverables which can cost time and man-hours in unpredictable ways. As with all aspects of PPP development, flexibility is key: something harder to accept when billing and budgets are less likely to be flexible.

The author, as both a researcher and as a Strategic adviser, felt it was counterproductive for external consultants to repeatedly express concern over SME budget while failing to provide a clear scope for these outsourced experts, which might have more efficiently managed SME budgeting before billing began. For example, in one conversation with an exterior consultant during the 2014 MOI PPP development efforts, the author was told, "we are really worried because the SMEs' schedules are affecting our budget. Being in great demand, their schedules are always full." This created the sense that there was a great risk of missing delivery dates or failing to accomplish goals if meetings or

workshops were cancelled, even though they often were. Ultimately, the Strategic Department advised the external consultants that SMEs would only attend T2 workshops, since these were the meetings where policy stakeholders discuss policy solutions and the SMEs' expertise is most valuable.

Using insider action research to situate the author's role as both researcher and participant/adviser allowed her to see how document analysis conducted as an adviser provided insight into a practical understanding of challenges faced in the NPM-motivated use of outsourced consultants. In January 2013, a 'road map' was created by the external consultants for the twenty-two policies that were under development at that time. Analysis of that road map found it to be vague: while it was issued to provide a timeline for policy development and demarcate important milestones, the road map did not provide realistic assessments of the time needed for experts, consultants, and stakeholders to complete required milestones, nor did it even attempt to provide key details as to the extent of the Subject Matter Experts' (SMEs') or Strategic Advisers' (SAs') involvement in milestone completion. Since, at this initial point in policy planning, the scope of many of the twenty-five policies was undefined, the lack of any clear articulation of the roles or even expected man-hours of the consultants provided no support to those who would be guided by the road map.

The author, in her role as adviser, recommended that subsequent versions of the road map more clearly articulate the expected role of the SMEs and SAs. This would include a clearer explanation of man-hours and scope of

these specialised, outsourced consultants. The author was able to review a second version of this road map in mid-February 2013; this version more clearly addressed the roles of the SMEs and SAs, but even this improved version did not adequately address the author's concerns.

SMEs' expertise and their knowledge of international best practice are important for shaping the future of policy and PPP development, but it often comes at a price beyond the monetary costs warned about in NPM. SMEs have to be acclimated to organisational contexts, and may bring too many of their own assumptions or ideas to the project. More importantly for all organisations developing NPM principles, the author recommends continually pushing policy owners and external consultants to think about and articulate their expectations for SME and consultant roles. Knowing before policy planning how much external expert time is available and how it can be most efficiently used is a central part of NPM, but does not receive enough attention during the early concept and planning stages of PPP development.

### 7.2.4 Problems with Outsourcing Organisational Learning

Part of the reason that external consultants are brought into ministries during policy development is to provide expertise on the ways that teams can share knowledge, learn new requirements or skills, and develop team mastery of new concepts. Yet, at several key points during the author's research, external consultants struggled to support OL, to the point where it is valuable, on the practical level, to ensure that policy makers pay special attention to the role of

external consultants in OL. Outsourcing parts of PPP development is a problem because external stakeholders (consultants) are not as invested in the long-term OL process as internal stakeholders. This may not be easily noticed because external stakeholders are often engaged in training practices.

A problem which occasionally occurred which directly impacted the external consultants' ability to invest in long-term OL was the use of language. Earlier in this chapter, the author discussed some of the ways that language was important in policy development and PPP construction. But it is also worth noting that the external consultants often used technical or business oriented language, which did not resonate with stakeholders who were not familiar with that jargon.

For example, in early 2013, the author observed an awareness session for about four hours about policy management that was run by the external stakeholders. The session included a clear definition of policy in its organisation context, the aims and benefits of developing policies, a comparison between policy and procedure in writing, with examples and the importance of scope in implementation, explaining policy types and complexity, describing in detail PPPs, stakeholders' roles and responsibilities, policy templates, etc. When asked for feedback, one of the officers who attended said "*It would be preferable for the policy section leader to conduct the full session and not share it with the consultant, since he speaks the organisational language*." This was not an unusual perspective; rather it occurred often in feedback from sessions that featured the external consultants. Respondents felt that consultants neither used

common organisation language nor used examples relevant to the organisation. Using language that stakeholders do not understand in the educational sessions is not conducive to OL.

The clearest indication that the external consultants were not in any way personally interested or involved in OL came from the distribution of expertise in the consultants' practice. While senior external consultants served as SMEs and senior project managers, many of the day to day interactions with consultants took place between MOI staff and junior consultants, many of whom were young and had prestigious qualifications but little experience in policy development, the UAE, or policing. These junior consultants were responsible for providing support for the policy unit, which was understaffed and in need of resources.

The experience with the junior consultants was not conducive to OL. The author felt, upon reflection, that the external consultants were learning and gaining experience personally as consultants, but that these consultants as a whole were not promoting learning about policy within the MOI. Junior consultants did not readily share knowledge, such that it made trust between the junior consultants and MOI staff to become strained. Junior consultants often competed with junior MOI staff to please senior leadership and left junior staff out of decision making, further contributing to the struggles in collaboration that were already rife in the MOI. Senior consultants primarily worked with senior MOI leadership and their own consultants, so junior MOI staff gained little meaningful experience with these senior experts, missing new opportunities for

learning within the organisation. None of this behavior indicates that the external consultants were interested in helping MOI staff develop their PPP skills, even though that was part of the mandate that the consulting firm was hired for.

Perhaps the greatest disconnect between the external consultants and the Strategy Department in relation to OL came when they proposed their ideas for how to approach 2014 policy development. In late 2013, the author recommended renewing the contract with the same consultation company to assist the policy development in the MOI for 2014. This was to use project learning experience either as a group or individually to deliver developed policies and to avoid risking a new consultants who had not yet adopted the organisational culture. In addition to planning to revise the 2013 documentation with reference to lessons learned from the previous year, the consultants suggested two streams of support.

The first stream, provided support by one team of consultants, would move the twelve policies which had already received PEC approval into stages 4 and 5 of the PPP process (consultation and approval for implementation). The second stream, which would also be supported by its own team of consultants, would focus on developing the remaining 10 policies through stages 1 and 2 (studying policy need and drafting policies) for PEC approval. Both streams would include on-the-job training. This on-the-job training and full support means that consultants work hand in hand with teams, contributing to and educating in policy-making. The external consultancy also removed all of the consultants who

had worked in 2013 to support the committees in proposing the first twelve policies, and instead proposed bringing in completely new staff to support both streams of policy development.

This proposal demonstrated a complete disregard for OL within the MOI, such that the author, as an advising participant, rejected the external consultants' proposal. If there was not consistent personnel assisting stakeholders through PPP and, as has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter, stakeholders often hesitated to fill out documentation or write down working knowledge, it would be difficult to ensure that implicit knowledge was being transferred and shared in the organisation. It would be questionable how continuity can be maintained, using similar consultant resources during a policy development lifecycle, given that each team engaged with writing policy is different that team engaged with consultation and implementation to same policy.

The Strategy Department also questioned how consultant team would ensure that lesson learned shared within two approach streams and with policy section teams. Even after the external consultants presented an alternative plan, which included shared documentation, plans for communication, and promises to bring back key consultants who participated in the previous year of policy development, there was still difficulty ensuring that consultants working on policies that overlapped were communicating with each other, or that stakeholders on cross-functioning policies were fully supported.

Whether discussing the scope of external consultants, or their role in OL, it is clear that there is a practical lesson to be learned, valuable especially to command and control organisations struggling with decentralisation and the outsourcing of policy development: because the PPP cycle is so attuned to the cultural, political, and social realities of the organisations which produce it, external consultants may not share those implicit understandings, nor are they necessarily willing or able to incorporate these organisation's core values. This is a two-sided issue: in many cases, consultants may be trying to unteach bad behaviors or encourage the difficult parts of implementing NPM because that was their very task. But in other cases, external consultants may be too far removed from the cultural frameworks regarding authority or hierarchy, creating unnecessary conflicts. Discussing Emirati notions of hierarchy and deference within the framework of PPP requires understanding that there can be benefits to embracing culture as part of collaborative relationships regardless of the challenges it presents to the implementation of NPM mindsets.

### 7.2.5 Practical Lessons about the UAE

On a practical level, the divide between federal and Emirate-level government is only one of the ways that authority and hierarchy is understood within the public administration of the UAE. Within ministries, there are also power dynamics which affect how policy is developed, how advising is received, and how decisions are made. Much of the Western literature focused on PPP

development (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; Colebatch 2006; Coghlan and Brannick 2015; Dunn 2015) or the application of NPM principles (Goldfinch 2009; Polidano 1999, 2008; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2009; Liddle 2017) is based in a worldview in which individualism is encouraged and democratic and collaborative thinking is intrinsic (Okoth 2015). In contrast, Emirati notions of hierarchy, client-patron roles, and social harmony mean that a different set of expectations are associated with various roles. By utilising reflection on the thesis research cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002), the author was able to explore how members of her Strategic Department were able to use their social position to facilitate the process of developing PPP and executable policy.

As an adviser in the Strategy Department of the MOI, with oversight of the ADP, the author was in a unique position to observe how the Strategic Department was situated during the 2012-2015 PPP development experience. The Strategy Department of the MOI is a part of the Undersecretary's Office of the MOI, directly under HH (the Minister of the Interior) in the hierarchy of the ministry; this access means that the Strategy Department supervises all the committees tasked with proposing new policy. This position in the federal administration's hierarchy (and subsequent role in the ADP) means that the staff of the Strategy Department are acknowledged at the directorate level, not department level, and they have the ability to supervise and advise departments across the entire federal-level organisation.

The Strategy Department oversees much of the strategy and policy

development across the MOI, promoting the achievement of strategic objectives and, perhaps more importantly, holding departments accountable through follow-up and evaluation. Because the Strategy Department directly reports on ministry progress to HH and a committee of top leadership, they are treated as an extension of this senior governmental leadership. Therefore, even if a Strategy Department manager or employee has less seniority or less experience, they still exercise that hidden authority of position in the hierarchy, which makes most of stakeholders seek effective engagement, collaboration and cooperation with us.

More directly, stakeholders felt obligated to please Strategy Department staff because of the social understandings of the hierarchy of the ministry. While the Strategy Department does have the ability to use this position directly to take strong stances, this power is rarely forced unless there are major issues which are negatively affecting the achievement of a major strategic objective or a department refuses to make changes necessary to move federal-level strategy forward. Instead, the author found that the deference granted to the Strategy Department because of its position in the Emirati public administration manifested as soft power that was particularly relevant to the development of PPP in 2013-2014.

Soft power was often used within the process of developing PPP and then developing policy as a way of encouraging stakeholders to stay engaged with these processes. The Strategy Department assigned a liaison officer or

established a unit of the Strategy Department in each department to facilitate the cascading of strategy and implementation within different directorate and committee. These liaisons held two roles: first, to support the stakeholders as they implemented policies, but second, to report back to the Strategy Department about concerns so that they could then gently encourage changes in behavior. This also allowed the Strategy Department to encourage and praise good stakeholder action as reported by the policy liaison, using soft power to motivate and change action.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** As an adviser in the Strategy Department of the MOI, it was very clear to me that the department's position was strong because we not only enforce policy, but are also shown the respect people reserve for sheikhs or other authority figures because we report directly to the minister. However, it was not until I reflected externally as a researcher that I was able to see how detrimental this position could be, if policy owners' need to please us was unintentionally delaying PPP development. By using soft power and encouraging committees to focus on policy development, rather than pleasing HH or the Strategic Department, I was able to help the MOI reorient its efforts in late 2013 and more successfully develop twenty-two policy initiatives in 2014.

But while the position of the Strategic Department allows it to wield the soft power necessary to help push PPP deployment at certain key stages, there is a disadvantage to this form of hierarchical culture, which is part of the reason that NPM theory points to the importance of decentralisation: because committees and departments were eager to please HH and other top leadership, they were also eager to avoid displeasing or failing to please the Strategic Department. This means that policy liaisons were unwilling to disagree with Strategic Department staff, or share their opinions that showed discomfort at policy owner performance. Policy owners, managers, and other departmental leaders often hide challenges from the Strategic Department, or claimed

consensus when none had been sought, to avoid drawing negative attention that might be reported to top ministry leadership.

This gap in communication was a cause for serious concern for the author, as it led to various points during project development where delays were caused by an unwillingness to admit assistance or interorganisational collaboration were needed. This, coupled with the general sense that new policies meant more work and oversight for stakeholders, meant that many stakeholders felt frustrated with balancing a results-orientation and the need to meet requirements with the continuous requests from the Strategic Department for quality PPP policies.

The author recommends utilising the soft power of the Strategy Department's position to positively encourage collaboration during PPP deployment. Leadership should reward success directly, promote awareness and learning to increase stakeholder participation and engagement in PPP deployment, and remain flexible and attentive to managers' needs during various stages of PPP planning. Departments in public administrations which, like the MOI's Strategy Department, sit in lofty positions in socially-ingrained hierarchies must separate the soft power from their more direct control and choose the correct approach at each stage of PPP deployment to balance stakeholder engagement and forward momentum.

This discussion of soft power and the placement of the Strategy Department in the hierarchy of the MOI emerges, in part, because of the

reflexivity that comes with insider action research - the author also had to reflect on the ways she used soft power, as a woman and expatriate, to garner the respect her skills should have accorded her. Reflecting on the experiences of a female expatriate in an advisory position of the UAE allowed to author to translate some of her implicit understandings to a larger audience.

### 7.2.6 Reflections on Researcher Position

Insider action research gives the researcher an opportunity to reflect on both her organisation and herself. By engaging in a thesis research cycle (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002) on top of the other core research cycles which explored specific ideas in the ADP and MOI, the author was able to explore questions beyond those drawn from regarding PPP, NPM, and OL. Many of the findings drawn regarding the role of Emirati culture and social structure fall within the purview of this thesis research cycle analysis. Other meritable findings, discussed below, also emerged from this reflective thesis research.

Jack Mezirow's work (1991, 2000) provided the analytical framework for the reflection used in the thesis research cycle. His three levels of reflection (content, process, and premise) provided an organisational and analytical outline that helped the author organise her reflections into meaningful categories. This helped themes to emerge in her reflections, and allowed her to step outside of her role as participant to gain perspective on the researcher's view of that participant. The author's thesis cycle data predominantly fell into Mezirow's categories of reflection.

In terms of *content reflection*, the author was able to generate data on PPP, NPM, and OL. This was done through document analysis and reflecting memos, and allowed the author to participate in the development of policy initiatives, governance framework documentation, substantive reports to MOI top leadership, and more. Many of the findings regarding PPP drawn in the core research cycles was supplemented by this content reflection.

By using *process reflection*, the author focused on the strategies, actions, and procedures that guided PPP and policy development and that were shaped by NPM principles. As NPM principles are applied in the rapidly changing MOI and Emirati public administration, many of the strategies and procedures that have marked MOI operations are changing; the author's reflections allowed her to understand how these changes related to PPP and OL in a command and control organisation.

Finally, in terms of *premise reflection*, the author focused on the underlying assumptions, context, and social situation surrounding her experiences in the MOI and ADP. This step was a challenge for her, as she did not fully understand how important her many competing roles (participant, researcher, adviser, adviser under HH, woman, expatriate, and more) were in generating data about and within her research (Berger 2015; Buchanan and Badham 2008; Coghlan and Brannick 2015). During her research, the author did not spend significant time reflecting on the ways that Emirati social dynamics shaped the command and control nature of UAE public administration (Okoth

2015; Mansour 2017). However, coding for themes and analysing her reflective data allowed the author to see just how important certain contexts and assumptions were in shaping PPP and contributing to OL.

Perhaps most importantly, premise reflection allowed the author to critically examine whether or not Western new public management principles were being successfully implemented in the UAE and whether or not all of these principles *should* be implemented in the UAE. In particular, questioning assumptions about how external consultants were and should be interacting with the organisation, and examining the language that should be used in command and control organisations allowed the author to better understand successes and challenges experienced at various stages of PPP at both the federal-level MOI and the Emirate-level ADP.

Through these levels of reflections, the author was able to generate enough data to supplement her other findings discussed earlier in this chapter with some observations about her positionality and the power dynamics of her context that provide insight into the UAE. While many of these insights were of interest to the author, they were too idiosyncratic to her department to easily explain. However, the author does feel it is absolutely necessary to reflect briefly on her unique positions as an Arab woman expatriate within a command and control organisation that has traditionally been staffed by men.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the author's research, one of which she did not reflect on during her research but instead gained insight into after

reviewing and coding her generated data, is the role that her gender played in many of the interactions with her own Strategy Department staff and with other MOI staff. Previous to the author, there had never been an Arab woman serving as an adviser in the Strategy Department of the MOI. While there are many female local military officers serving in the ADP, none of the civilian civil servants in an advising position (in the author's case, through the MOI Strategy Department) were women during the period of research. Thus, military officers were not used to listening to and being criticised by a woman; any women were below them in rank and under their command. Thus, the author had exceptionally high, elite status for a woman within the MOI, and was in a position that required her to comment on and advise men who worked on committees or in organisations situated beneath the Strategy Department. The author is the highest status civilian women in the MOI, and has a technical background in addition to expertise in developing organisational systems, as opposed to military experience.

As has been explained elsewhere in this thesis, the UAE public administration is experiencing a wide variety of rapid changes to organisational structure, requirements, and culture. Many of the Emirati colleagues of the author were, upon reflection, not fully comfortable working with a woman. For example, one of the first times that the author met one of the senior officers/stakeholders she would be advising, he responded to her introduction with *"I guess you are new here and do not know your own title; you are a senior*

*assistant, not a senior adviser. We do not have expatriate women as senior advisers."* Considering Emirati social and religious norms about the roles of each gender, many did not view the author's contributions as equal to her male counterparts.

**REFLECTIVE PAUSE:** I realised, upon looking at my memos and journals, that conducting this research motivated me to attend more meetings than previous to research. As a woman, I often had to take initiative to know when meetings were occurring and attend them; feeling motivated by data generation encouraged me to be more engaged and attend more events. In this way, research helped me to become a more engaged participant within the organisation, and improved my contribution to the department as an adviser.

It has been widely documented that Emirati citizens and foreign expatriates are treated differently in the UAE. Thus, the author's position as an expatriate did affect the power dynamics with those she interacted with. All other expatriates within the Strategy Department and in other advisory positions within the MOI were foreign; the author was the only Arab and Emirati-born expatriate in the department. The author was, as many civilian expatriate staff members in the MOI are, encouraged not to be inappropriately enthusiastic with her opinions, especially those which conflicted with other Strategy Department staff. She often reflected that management was more likely to focus their learning or empowering efforts on military officers rather than expatriates, even though she was an expatriate that spoke Arabic as her native language.

Expatriates were expected to make their voices heard through reports and memos, rather than at meetings. For example, early on in her time in the Strategy Department, the author listed her name on a presentation of an assessment she wrote. She was told by one of her senior managers, *"do not put*

*your name in any deliverable you provide. I will recognise your contribution when you send me emails with reports, but never put your name on work my department produces."* In many cases, the author was attending meetings as a standby, unable to talk or contribute because a higher ranking member of the Strategy Department was present to speak on their behalf. The author believes that this was because the expectation is that expatriates are not viewed as being as loyal, and so are not taken as seriously as Emirati staff. Military officers are also viewed as having more power than civilian staff, further dividing Emirate citizens from expatriates.

One observation the author made upon reflecting on the thesis cycle was that many of her Emirati colleagues were competing with each other to please their shared manager; as a result, they would refuse to share information with each other for fear of losing a competitive edge. However, the author was able to recognise this competition largely because she was exterior to it: as a civilian expatriate, her role in the organisation cannot change through promotion, and she cannot compete with the Emirati military officers holding positions in the Strategy Department. As she was exterior to the race for promotion, other team members did not feel the need to hide information with her, and were more willing to share drafts of materials. In this case, her role as an expatriate had a more positive effect - and understanding these complexly competing consequences of the author's position is important for appreciating the unique context created by the UAE. Unfortunately, this has often meant that any

knowledge which the author shared with Emirati colleagues was used for promotion without credit to the author, largely because her position does not allow for promotion, a reflection that unfortunately occurred often in her reflective memos.

Both the theoretical and the empirical findings regarding the UAE, and many of the other findings beyond, discuss the ways that Emirati understandings of hierarchy, pleasing authority figures, sharing work or ideas, gathering input, or collaborating interorganisationally affect PPP. It should not be surprising that these Emirati worldviews also shaped the experience of the author as both a researcher and as a participant. The author's role, within her organisations and within her own research, allowed her to come to a number of conclusions. These conclusions provide insight into the Global South case example of the Emirates, and are articulated in the final chapter of this thesis. But before moving to these conclusions, as well as the author's suggestions for future research, it is worth reflecting on the findings as a whole, especially to ensure quality of the data and the reflections.

### 7.3 Summary of Findings

The author determined that the best way to organise her findings were to group those which focused more on broad theoretical ideas from those which focused on the empirical practice of the PPP. Her theoretical findings were heavily drawn from reflections on whether or not the theories and models offered by Western authors would resonate within the UAE and sought to illuminate

some of the factors that might cause such dissonance between what theory suggests and what evidence-based practice finds.

First and foremost, the author found that the broadly outlined PPP cycle, used by many authors in the West, does not quite fit the Emirati experience; nor has the execution of new public management principles been a perfect fit for the UAE MOI. The Emirati PPP cycle is more heavily based on constant evaluation rather than collaborative consultation. Similarly, NPM implementation in the UAE is spotty because of mistrust, lack of cooperation, and a desire to please authority rather than collaborate.

Many of the challenges to collaboration are caused by the client-patron mindset which, regardless of NPM implementation, still permeates Emirati public servants, especially among Emirati citizens who view their role in relation to HH as paramount. This cultural framework meant that many were eager to please the Strategy Department out of loyalty to the hierarchy, and this is only exacerbated by the nepotism which is common practice within Emirati public administration. However, the author did note that nepotistic appointments at least have some benefit of creating a reason for disparate teams to coordinate and collaborate.

In addition, the author provided a pair of arguments exploring OL theories using an Emirati case example, contributing to the bodies of literature which discuss triple-loop learning and the learning organisation. The author, by operationalising her position as an adviser in the Strategy Department, was able

to engage in triple-loop learning and provide a real-world example of OL theory in practice, which could be used by other Emirati departments to improve their process of improvement, just as the MOI did. The author also demonstrated that, although neither the MOI nor the ADP are learning organisations, there is merit in exploring why they do not qualify and what these deficiencies say about the organisation's approach to knowledge, sharing information, and long-term team growth. A summary of main theoretical findings of this thesis can be found

| | |
|---|---|
| PPP | The Emirati PPP cycle is notably different than the models used in hegemonic Western literature, particularly in relation to ideas of evaluation and consultation. |
| NPM | The author can confirm Salem and Jarrar's main argument that Emirati public servants often exhibited behavior which demonstrated mistrust, frustration, lack of cooperation, desire for individual recognition over group success, and lack of care for outcomes. |
| OL | This thesis demonstrates a case example of triple-loop learning occurring in real time in the Global South. |
| OL | There is value in the knowledge about OL in the UAE that can be gained only by reflecting on why the MOI and ADP are not learning organisations. |
| UAE | Regardless of the uneven application of NPM principles in the UAE, the desire to please the royal family, including ministries, remains strong, especially among Emirati citizens. |
| UAE | There are benefits, even within an NPM framework, to nepotistic appointments across multiple levels of public administration. |

**Table 7: Summary of Theoretical Findings**

in Table 7 below.

The author also sought to make some concrete recommendations for practical application of the reflections gathered from her research; these constitute the empirical or practice findings of the thesis. Many of these focused

directly on the PPP cycle, and how to over obstacles which can delay the process. Because the author was able to observe many PPP cycles in her role as adviser to the many policy initiatives which followed HH's decree, she was able to see some overarching trends to PPP development and deployment in the UAE that have relevance to other Emirati ministries as well as to other public administrations.

One of the most central foci of this thesis was the experience of the PPP cycle in a Global South case example; thus, her first finding is that policy makers should be aware that the process often stutters, with shorter or more prolonged stages. Flexibility is the key to ensuring that policy can be shaped to fit the specific needs of stakeholders and policy owners. This may include the flexibility to utilise bottom-up policy development, even within a command and control public administration (Lipsky 1980; Baldwin and Cave 1999) like that of the UAE.

The author also points to several aspects of the PPP experience that can be addressed in practical ways. Both the governance framework documentation and the standardised documentation that drives policy development must be designed to take into account the way language is used in the UAE, and the way that collaboration and sharing occurs within Emirati public administration. Interdependencies must be a factor that is considered from the beginning of the PPP cycle, and in all governing frameworks and shared discussions. In addition, attention must be paid to the scope and actions of external consultants and SMEs, who are a valuable resource but are often adopted wholesale as part of

NPM, without their drawbacks considered.

The author also looks at some of the positional politics that were relevant to her research, and shaped findings that helped provide a practical understanding of the Emirati public administration experience. By using Mezirow's reflection framework to explore her own position and the position of her department, the author was able to provide insight into a very selective and specific organisation that few have direct access to. These practical findings are summarised in Table 8 below.

| | |
|---|---|
| PPP | Flexibility is important for each stage of PPP. |
| PPP | Policy planners should be aware of the type of language used in policy in command and control organisations, and pay attention to the ways that language shapes policy. |
| PPP | GF documentation that matches organisational culture is important to PPP success because it translates stakeholder learning and engagement into the roles and responsibilities that are necessary to facilitate the relationships that ensure policy delivery, and does so in a way stakeholders can understand. |
| PPP | Standardised policy templates serve to support policy owners and relevant stakeholders in generating structured policy solutions, defining the scope of the implementation requirements from the standpoint of development, and minimising unwanted strategic and legal consequences. |
| PPP | Even within command and control based public administrations, there is space for bottom-up policy development. |
| PPP | Organisational and policy interdependencies have a significant impact on the policy process, but are largely ignored by stakeholders and policy owners, requiring attention on the part of advisers. |
| NPM | There is the under-acknowledged challenge of determining the scope of support from external consultants or subject matter experts (SMEs). |
| OL | Outsourcing parts of PPP development is a problem because external stakeholders (consultants) are not as invested in the long-term OL process as internal stakeholders. This may not be easily noticed because external stakeholders are often engaged in training practices. |
| UAE | Deference granted to the Strategy Department because of its position in the Emirati public administration manifested as soft power that was particularly relevant to the development of PPP in 2013-2014. |
| IAR | The author was able to use Mezirow's reflection framework to draw a wider range of conclusions about her research. |
| IAR | The author's position as a expatriate woman was relevant to her observations about PPP, NPM, and OL in the UAE. |

**Table 8: Summary of Practical and Empirical Findings**

In addition to these findings, the author has a number of recommendations for policy makers and public administrators. Many of these

recommendations will be directly applicable to other Emirati organisations, but many will be more broadly adaptable to other command and control organisations and beyond. Also, working through the recommendations drawn from the data provides insight into the ways insider action research allows participants to comment on their own organisations and their own learning as a member of those organisations. Many of these recommendations stem from the author's dual role as a researcher and an adviser within the Strategy Department.

### 7.4 Summary of Recommendations

Many of the recommendations of this thesis were discussed in context with their associated findings, such as discussions of creating templates for standardising expectations, or utilising soft power and nepotism to foster collaboration. The author provides a summary of these major recommendations in Table 9 below. There is also a table of Emirati-specific, empirical recommendations that are directly related to research. These are of interest to other Emirati public servants and could be used to improve best practices within the specifically-Emirati context.

| |
|---|
| Organisations should do a critical evaluation of their needs before they decide to implement NPM practices. NPM must be implemented gradually, in ways which take into account pre-existing cultural norms regarding hierarchy and authority. |
| All involved in the PPP cycle should recognise that its stages are flexible, and respond with flexibility and nuance. |
| PPP development should always be preceded by the formulation of standardised policy templates. This ensures clear communication and collaboration, and defines expectations. |
| Policy advisers should continually push policy owners and stakeholders to think about and articulate their expectations for SME and consultant roles. |
| Policy makers can utilise soft power, even if gained through deference, to positively encourage collaboration during PPP deployment. |
| Policy makers should have realistic expectations when developing many pieces of policy simultaneously; interdependencies between policies may slow down the process of consultation and approval. |
| Organisations should create a culture of learning, or try to become a learning organisation. |
| Insider action research and reflective core/thesis research can provide insight into how organisations learn about learning and how they share knowledge about PPP. |
| **Table 9: Summary of Recommendations from Research** |

The findings and recommendations discussed in this chapter were drawn from years of reflection on the policy process in the MOI and ADP. Her description of the PPP cycle in the UAE is a worthwhile glimpse into the nature of public administration in the Global South. The author is also providing insight into how processes like outsourcing and standardisation play a part in the development of policy in a Global South. The role of OL in developing policy, and even in the process of creating PPP and guidance documents, was put into the Emirati context.

The author was able to gain insight into the efficacy of new public

management approaches, and discuss reasons that Mansour (2017) and Salem (Salem and Jarrar 2012) are correct in their assessment that NPM implementation has been of mixed success. The author discussed findings regarding nepotism, mistrust, competition over collaboration, unwillingness to define roles, bias against women, and reverence for silo-structured, command and control hierarchy. Woven through, the author has provided the reader with insight into the specificities of a case example from the UAE, adding to the literature which demonstrates the ways that Global South public administrations fit scholarly theories and where evidence-based analysis reveals that these developing world governments do not fit hegemonic Western theory. Various discussions can be addressed by utilising these findings and recommendations, which could improve public administration in the UAE and beyond, address some of the gaps in the academic literature, and steer future research which builds upon the thesis research.

# Chapter 8: Discussions

Beyond the practical recommendations and specific findings drawn from the data generated during the author's inside action research, the author was able to draw some larger conclusions about PPP, NPM, and OL in the Emirati context. These points and broader reflections serve two purposes: first, to provide the empirical conclusions of merit for policy makers and public administrators to integrate into their policy processes; and second, to directly address several gaps in the literature regarding PPP, NPM, and OL, especially in the Global South broadly and the Emirates specifically. With these goals, the author justifies both the thesis itself and the inside action research which generated the data.

## 8.1 Discussion of Empirical Findings

A major practical achievement of this thesis research is its description and analysis of the PPP cycle as used by the Emirati public administration. The UAE PPP cycle differs substantially with the predominant Western model (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; Skok 1995; Bovens et al. 2001; Bridgman and Davis 2003; Colebatch 2006; Coghlan and Brannick 2015; Dunn 2015), below written utilising Howlett et al.'s (2009) format. As is listed in Table 10 below, the Emirati PPP cycle does not evenly align with the predominant Western PPP cycle from their second stages, where the two frameworks diverge over their use of consultation and stakeholders' input.

| Predominant Western PPP Model (Birkland 2015 and others) | Emirati PPP Model |
|---|---|
| • Agenda setting<br>• Formulation<br>• Decision-making<br>• Implementation<br>• Evaluation | • Studying need<br>• Drafting the policy<br>• PEC assessment<br>• Consultation<br>• Approval for implementation |

Table 10: Comparison of PPP Models

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the main differences between Western PPP cycle models and the PPP cycle that is used in the Emirati government revolve around issues of authority, evaluation, and consultation, all of which are culturally-ingrained values. The Emirati PPP cycle offers more opportunity for approval from those at the top of the hierarchy, while de-emphasising input from stakeholders in early drafting. In most cases, the author found that these differences stemmed from policy owners not seeking the input of others even though many responsibilities had been diffused through decentralisation - almost exactly what Salem and Jarrar (2012) found in their survey research in Emirati public administration. Emirati public servants trust the hierarchy and the system, not each other (Salem and Jarrar 2012). The author found that constant competition fueled this mistrust.

The client-patron nature of Emirati governance has diminished in recent years due to modernisation and the application of NPM principles, but not nearly to the degree that MOI leadership might have hoped. The author has demonstrated in this thesis that the command and control structure of Emirati

public administration - based around “silos” (Salem and Jarrar 2012) of knowledge - not only shapes the policy that is developed, but also shaped the process by which that policy is researched, planned, and proposed. The author found that cultural desires to please certain authorities, avoid taking blame or committing to responsibilities, and support nepotism all had, in direct or indirect ways, a negative impact on policy development in the UAE, largely through delay and miscommunication.

Thus, the author recommends that future scholars writing about PPP ought not be so bound by Western models (Birkland 2015), which more heavily emphasise formulation, input, and evaluation; policy makers in the Global South also need not compare their PPP cycles only with Western models. This is not to say that the Emirati PPP cycle is superior to other models - in fact, the author would argue that there is not even enough literature describing alternative PPP cycles to allow for a thorough comparison. This thesis provides an evidence-based evaluation of the efficacy of the UAE PPP cycle (which, in some instances was highly successful, and others less so), particularly in relation to issues such as external consultants, flexibility of stage milestones, and the importance of standardised documentation.

One of the major empirical achievements of this thesis was to document the uneven application of NPM principles (Polidano 1999, 2008; Goldfinch 2009; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2009) in the Emirati public administration. This research has been an excellent vehicle for understanding how the author’s organisations

(MOI/ADP) adopted NPM. Later in this chapter, the author discusses the place of this thesis in the movement to close a gap in the literature regarding NPM; here, however, it is worth reflecting on exactly how which NPM principles are not being successfully implemented, and why, based on the research findings. The author found that cultural norms, such as acceptance of nepotism and eagerness to please royal authority, led many policy makers to ignore entire NPM principles. such as incentivisation meritocratisation, and decentralisation. da Cunha Rezende (2008) and others have argued that the selective or haphazard application of NPM principles marks much of the NPM experience in the Global South, and the author found the UAE to be no exception because of the Emirati emphasis on position and patronage over merit or quality. Thus, it is not to say that NPM implementation has failed in the UAE; rather, as both Mansour (2017) and Salem (2014, 2016; Salem and Jarrar 2012) have recently argued, there is a reluctance by Emirati public administrators to adopt certain key NPM points regarding accountability and trust.

Thus, though Polidano argues that, “outcome of individual NPM initiatives depends on localised contingency factors rather than any general national characteristics” (1999: 1), the author has to disagree. Certainly, individual policies, committees, and stakeholders, as localised contingency factors, had a significant impact on how successfully NPM principles were enacted in the MOI or ADP. But the author, in her position as an adviser in the Strategy Department, was able to observe the trends described in her findings at the Emirate-level (at

the ADP) and across multiple committees and departments from the federal-level (at the MOI). Behaviors, such as attempts to please HH and other royal authority, unwillingness to define accountability of stakeholders, or acceptance of nepotism, were all so systemic that one cannot help but draw conclusions that general national characteristics are responsible for many of the outcomes from uneven NPM implementation.

Since the author feels her arguments do contribute to discussions of national identity and NPM application, she was also able to reflect on the greater applicability of her findings to discussions of NPM in the Global South. da Cunha Rezende (2008) argued that complete NPM adoption was less successful in economically secure countries where central authority gained obedience through patronage. This was largely what the author found in her research on the UAE, demonstrating the country's place in the larger discussion of the Global South. Continued economic success in the UAE is allowing long-standing adherence to social hierarchy rules to stay in effect, even after NPM principles which contradict them have been applied; the result is, at best, beneficial nepotism and at worst, incompetent communication. The author has illuminated examples where centralisation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration have failed in the Emirate context, demonstrating that NPM implementation in this Global South context is neither complete nor unhindered (Mansour 2017; Salem and Jarrar 2012).

The author was also able to devote significant reflection to the multiple

levels of interdependencies that exist within the Emirati policy making experience, many of which either shape the content of policy, affect the development of policy, and even organise the interactions of policy owners and advisory staff. The Emirates themselves offer a unique opportunity to examine the concept of interdependencies at the organisational level, in comparison to other countries, because of the Emirates' combination of monarchy and federalism (Okoth 2015). Thus, the complex interdependencies that come from Emirates' ministries and organisations relating to each other, and the challenges of operating as a federal unit (Okoth 2015), are worth scholarly discussion, especially as these interdependent levels implement NPM principles (Mansour 2017). But beyond the theoretical discussion, the author found that paying attention to interdependencies was so vital on a day-to-day basis that pragmatic conclusions had to be drawn from the experience to provide to other policy advisers and public administrators.

Drawing attention to interdependencies is a necessary part of developing policy; this means that educational and training programming for policy makers should always take interdependencies into account (see Worren 2012). So often in the author's research, policy development was delayed by stakeholders who did not grasp how policies were interdependent on other policies, or how various stakeholders were involved based on their own organisational interdependencies. While the author discussed specific applications of the concept in her findings, the overarching paradigm of interdependence also

permeates so much of the author's experience.

The author also provided insight into the working experience of an Arab-female-expatriate working in the UAE. Changing conceptions of the professional roles of women, along with growing tensions between Emirati citizens and expatriates, mean that external researchers might have difficulty generating high-quality data about the female expatriate experience. But since the author was an insider to elite Emirati federal and Emiratel-level ministries and organisations, she has been able to lend a voice to a largely understudied demographic and collect quality data about how expatriates and women are treated in the upper-echelons of the Emirati public administration. Her findings, unsurprisingly, showed that her opinion mattered less, her credit was taken more often, and her qualifications and actions were questioned more often, either because she was a woman or an expatriate; more likely, because of both.

These empirical findings should better inform non-Emirati readers about some of the issues which directly affect policy development. Understanding how Emirati culture, particularly in terms of authority, command, and consultation, affects policy development requires drawing the line between that culture and the policy process; this thesis has demonstrated that a different PPP cycle and the spotty application of NPM principles in the UAE may cause unnecessary delays or challenges to policy development.

## 8.2 Addressing Gaps in the Literature

The author also wishes to address several gaps in the literature, many of which were discussed earlier during the various literature review chapters (3-5). In many cases, the author's main scholarly contributions were to provide an evidence-based Emirati case example which could help to flesh out understandings of the policy process and NPM in the Global South. The thesis' purpose is to present compelling evidence and recommendations generated from inside action research, not to propose new theory. Therefore, many of the gaps in the literature that the author attempts to address are related to broadening the overall understanding of a theory to include Global South cases. However, there is also value to discussing why the Emirati case may diverge from currently existing literature (Howlett et al. 2009, for example, or any of the many others cited earlier), in order to illuminate new potential gaps in the current state of research.

One aspect of her literature search that the author found particularly frustrating was the evidence-based research available regarding the PPP cycle. While there are numerous studies and texts (Sabatier and Mazmanian 1979, 1980; Kingdon 1995; Skok 1995; Bovens et al. 2001; Bridgman and Davis 2003; Philips and Levasseur 2004; Hajer 2005; Colebatch 2006; Coghlan and Brannick 2015; Dunn 2015; many others) which exist and discuss how the PPP cycle is put into use, they are all drawn from a Western context. As a result, these authors use very similar PPP cycles as their framework; they draw heavily

from the same foundational theories and make similar recommendations. But these models cannot be applied in all cases, and well-articulated, alternative models of the PPP cycle are largely unavailable in the literature. The author's department did not use a PPP cycle that resembled the model which dominates the majority of PPP-related literature. The Emirati model was very different, primarily for the cultural reasons already discussed above. The UAE PPP and other policy materials also did not use the same language as Western examples (Coghlan and Brannick 2015), but because of the gap in literature in regards to language used in non-Western PPP cycles, the author did not have other works for comparison. The author's research revealed that there is a glaring hole in the literature when it relates to evidence-based discussions of the PPP cycle in Global South cases.

Thus, the author's work serves to address a significant gap in the literature: providing an alternative model for a PPP cycle, based on evidence drawn from the Global South. The author does not presume to say that her research fills this gap; quite the opposite, she only intends for her work to draw attention to a gap that many scholars will seek to fill, drawing evidence from a variety of Global South public administrations around the world. Just as no single Western model should be held as indicative of the norm, nor should the Emirati example be assumed to speak for all Global South examples.

Similarly, the author's findings regarding NPM implementation in the UAE should not be taken as representative of all NPM application experiences in the

Global South, but they are indicative of some of the general trends in NPM implementation in the Global South. Flávio da Cunha Rezende argued that “the role of the state was not transformed as intensely as heralded with the spread of the [NPM] reforms. Comparative experience reveals that governments, especially the richest ones, maintain their intervention profiles, the make-up of their expenditures and the size of their public administrations” (da Cunha Rezende 2008:52). The author’s findings seem to demonstrate this argument.

The literature on NPM implementation in the UAE, as explained earlier, falls into two categories. The first set of researchers focus their analysis on the implementation of one specific NPM principles or technologies, such as eGovernment or SMART city technologies (al-Yahya 2008; al-Yahya and Farah 2009; Rahman et al. 2015; Salem 2016). However, in the years since this thesis was researched and written, a small set of authors (Salem and Jarrar 2012; Salem 2014; Mansour 2017) have begun producing high quality scholarship which examines how NPM mindsets as a whole have been implemented in the UAE. Both authors agree that the uneven application of NPM ideas, values, and practices has resulted in a significant gap between the ideals of successful NPM implementation and the realities of the Emirati public administration experience. The implementation of NPM principles has been only partially successful, and has also had some negative side effects, particularly in terms of mistrust (Salem and Jarrar 2012).

Salem and Mansour are the first two authors producing significant studies

that describe the overall effect of NPM application in the UAE; as their work is so recent proves that this is a visible gap that is only beginning to be addressed. This thesis joins the work of Salem and Mansour in examining how NPM principles are actually functioning in a still predominantly command and control Emirati public administration. But unlike Salem and Mansour, both of which are fundamentally positioned as researchers looking into Emirati public administration, the author is an inside action researcher, using her pre-existing roles to gain further insight. In this sense, this thesis provides a significant contribution in addressing a serious gap in the literature: the author explores the very spotty application of NPM principles in the UAE administration from her position as an inside adviser.

The author also addresses two different scholarly gaps in relation to organisational learning, attempting to help close the spaces in these literatures through the presentation of an evidence-based, Emirati example. The first gap the author explores is the lack of evidence-based examples of triple-loop learning (Wang and Ahmed 2003), particularly those drawn from the Global South or based on inside action research. The author's position, as an adviser with the Strategy Department, gave her the opportunity to reflect on the many levels of learning that were occurring between the interdependent federal and Emirat-level public servants, including those who held multiple roles on multiple levels. This allowed the author to reflect on, and describe for other scholars, an example of triple-loop learning in use in a Global South case example.

The author has also contributed to the larger discussion of the learning organisation, although moreso by presenting a case which demonstrates the failure to apply learning organisation tenets in the face of uneven NPM implementation. By Senge's (1990) foundational definition, organisations need to utilise systemic thinking, operationalise shared vision and mental models, and encourage both team learning and personal mastery. Demonstrating that neither the MOI nor the ADP possess many of these characteristics, least of all promotion of team or individual learning, has given the author the opportunity to dialogue with other scholars of the Global South (Khadra and Rawabdeh 2006; Dirani 2009) who are also showing that the Western model of the learning organisation cannot be so easily overlaid atop Global South evidence. In addition, the author would argue that many of the ideas inherent in the learning organisation framework, particularly around team learning, personal mastery, and shared visions, align with NPM principles such that becoming a learning organisation is a process of implementing NPM ideals within an organisation. In this sense, then, the inability for the MOI to become a true learning organisation is yet another sign of the inability to implement NPM principles wholesale in the UAE.

In conclusion, the author has addressed several gaps in the literature, although certainly makes no claims to have resolved any major debates. This thesis has provided some practical discussions for policy makers in the UAE and elsewhere to consider, particularly in relation to alternative models of the PPP

cycle that are being used in real policy development in the Global South. This chapter has summarised some of the larger practical findings and recommendations here, as well as addressed some of those gaps. Most directly, the author has commented on PPP, NPM, and OL in a specific Global South example, providing data and analysis as well as a compelling argument that Western theories only partially apply to the evidence-based data generated for this thesis.

## Chapter 9: Conclusions and Future Research

This research focused not on policy analysis but on policy study and, rather than analysing policy content, studied the assumptions, issues, factors and causes in adopting new practices in PPP. This thesis examined the uneven application of NPM principles in the Emirati public administration, and discussed the cultural understandings that may cause tensions around NPM in the UAE. This research discussed OL, as influenced by organisational context and impacting on PPP. It also showed the effect of policy scope, type and stakeholders' interests on the shaping of policy processes to attain the organisation's goals and effectively solve its problems. This study seeks to understand in depth the new learning practices associated with the deployment of PPP and NPM in the UAE government. These learning practices are meant to be shared as guidance or lessons for other UAE governments. The integrated concepts of policy analysis are meant to be communicated through focusing on the activities related to improving policy-making and on evaluating the activities related to the policy's impact.

This research draws on the author's experience of policy-making, typically depending on her observations and interpretations to understand the actions and decisions of PPP. The aim was to generalise issues and lesson to be learned, while grounding the experience and using its evidence to develop and implement further policies, in other words, documenting practice as guidance or in case studies, (evidence-based management) for other UAE

government bodies. This approach is mostly taken by social scientists who base their policy theories on previous experiences. This experience did not always present the aims and views of the people under study but can understand events by interpreting them as socially constructed. This type of research is sometimes controversial, but it is very interesting to follow what actually happens rather than describing what was planned. Such research is simply exploratory; people learn by practicing different examples of policy-making.

## 9.1 General Research Contributions

This thesis has provided a number of broad contributions to the study of PPP, NPM, and OL, especially in the case example of the UAE. This thesis is the culmination and accomplishment of the author's efforts to provide evidence-based insight into the experience of public administration in the UAE. The author's contributions are buttressed, in part, by her observations about her unique position within the organisations she studied, and her reflections on her position have themselves generated valuable data regarding the experiences of a female expatriate in the Emirati public administration. The author generally summarizes her contributions below.

### 9.1.1 Academic Contributions

The author has provided several useful theoretical findings. Academic discussions of the PPP cycle lack a wide enough range of examples from the

Global South and, as the thesis has demonstrated, understandings of the PPP cycle are too heavily based on the Western contexts in which original ideas of PPP developed. As a result, the broad stages of the PPP cycle commonly used in academic literature did not easily map onto the Emirate experience, leading the author to address this gap in the literature by providing an evidence-based example of an alternative PPP cycle in use today. The author also found that the PPP cycle is highly idiosyncratic: each policy owner and set of stakeholders creates a unique experience that requires a high degree of flexibility.

This thesis also directly explores the uneven application of NPM principles in Emirate public administration, and discusses the impact of these deficiencies in relation to PPP development and deployment. The author strongly agrees with Mansour's (2017) argument that the client-patron, command and control nature of Emirate society directly impacts Emirati public administration, causing difficulties in embracing NPM models with attempting a piecemeal approach. As such, the author has noted that the ways in which culture expressed itself throughout the PPP cycle.

In particular, it was so important for the author to keep in mind the work of Coghlan and Brannick (2015) and others who encourage action researchers to be aware of the power dynamics and positioning of the researcher. This is because many of the obstacles to NPM implementation and PPP deployment stem from the role that earning and maintaining one's position in the social hierarchy plays in communications and collaboration. This included everything

from refusing to share information, trying to please higher-ranking officers at the expense of outcomes, mistrust in other departments to paying deference to the Strategy Department, complaining about documents listing too many requirements to ambiguous language and misleading claims about consultation and input. The uneven deployment of NPM principles led to delays in the PPP cycle, from lack of stakeholder input to refusal to complete requirements.

Those who embraced some of the NPM ideas more directly, especially in relation to collaboration and consultation, were more successful in their efforts to move their policy through the PPP cycle to approval. In particular, those who sought a more bottom-up approach to the PPP cycle's stage of drafting (2) before PEC assessment, gathering more stakeholder input about challenges in real application and implementation of the proposed policy, developed more realistic policies that better addressed real needs.

Some NPM principles, such as standardisation of templates (Hood 1995; Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011; Liddle 2017), were successfully implemented and, more importantly, directly contributed to the success of twenty-two new policies, as well as improvements on departmental PPP experience, and better trained advisers and policy owners. Standardising templates not only creates the opportunity for assessment of performance across uniform input, but also lays the foundation for a shared vision and a organisational approach to knowledge and communication.

Interestingly enough, reflecting upon PPP in the MOI/ADP and how

cross-referenced or interdependent policies developed and were planned, the author finds that one Emirati professional behavior - nepotism - may have benefits to collaboration, regardless of the fact that nepotism sits in stark contrast to NPM's principles of transparency, decentralisation, and meritocratic competition. Certainly, nepotism is easily lead to abuse and can cause organisations to miss opportunities to promote talent. The fact that, for example, the MOi missed an opportunity to develop organisational knowledge and personal mastery of its employees by using nepotism to choose which individuals were sent for training abroad for graduate study. However, the nepotistic practice of assigning leadership positions to notable, connected figures - even if all the actual work is outsourced to a consultant - does benefit policy developers because it can increase stakeholder engagement, draw attention and funding to policy implementation, and create artificial connections with other stakeholders connected to that notable figure, leading to more communication and collaboration.

This has profound implications for policy development in command and control public administrations (Baldwin and Cave 1999), as well as Global South. It is not unusual for policy projects or initiatives to have a notable figure attached to them, even if in largely symbolic ways. If policy owners and advisers encouraged cooperation, shared planning and budgeting, coordination of external consultants, shared stakeholder feedback collection, or other forms of collaboration along the lines of shared patron, this could help to overcome

mistrust or disassociation. Recommendations such as these - to maintain a notable figurehead - are both theoretical and practical, as were many of the contributions of this thesis.

### 9.1.2 Practical Contributions

This research explored how PPP itself can offer an effective learning situation which yielded lessons for UAE government bodies to absorb. This was both intentional learning, in the case of the pilot study of the ADP use of force and rules of pursuit policies in 2013-2015, and general, as part of the author's dual role as adviser and researcher. This thesis illustrates tendencies from the UAE context that resemble international ones, such as adopting best practice for formulating policy solutions, benefiting from the contribution of SMEs, and commissioning research if new policy is needed. But this thesis also highlights where Emirate practices deviate, and the importance of those positions. Many committees the author worked with in 2013 did not succeed in moving their sixty-eight policy proposals through the PPP cycle. The MOI should no longer tolerate such a high rate of failure, even when it is difficult to determine what constitutes policy success. Flexibility is key to helping committees reach their full potential, but they must also be guided firmly.

This research empirically revealed that it is useful to identify the positioning or the purpose of developing policy in the organisation's systems before launching any policy project. This helps to make policy fit for purpose

rather than overloading government organisations with new requirements or calls for documentation, which make compliance very difficult. In this sense, policy positioning is influenced by organisational context and has repercussions for communication, awareness, training and governance requirements.

The author was also able to draw some practical conclusions about the adoption of NPM principles as it relates to PPP development and deployment. The author found that the wholesale acceptance of external consultants as ready to immerse themselves in organisational culture and support OL was a naive folly that comes with embracing NPM principles without full assessment of organisational need. Defining the scope, language, motivation, focus, and responsibilities of external consultants is an extremely difficult process in large-scale projects which cross multiple levels of government (in this case, federal-level and Emirate-level policy development).

Perhaps one of the most important lessons learned by the author was that it can be problematic to use Western theories to explain how policy, management principles, or learning behaviors will operate in the Global South. The ability to be in a position to recognise this is one of the greatest opportunities of insider action research. Accepting that her organisation was not a learning organisation, was not fully embracing NPM models as much as leadership might hope, and was not utilising a PPP cycle that aligned with Western diagrams was a challenge for the author, and was only possible through reflective memoing and acknowledging her role as an agent of change.

## 9.2 Research Limitations

There were a number of limitations which affected this study, some of which could be rectified with future research. One of the limitations which affected the study was that the author was not fully aware of her methodology while conducting her research. This is not unusual for insider action researchers who quickly utilise opportunities presented in their organisation (Coghlan and Brannick 2015). The author conducted much of the reflective memoing without a larger research cycle to initially organise thoughts, limiting the amount of adaptation that was possible within the context of the research study. Reflexive research reveals the difficulties of uncontrolled data collection due the huge scope of PPP deployment within two of biggest public organisation in UAE government. This meant she was also, at times, overwhelmed with data to collect, and had to make decisions about how to sample and what to prioritise.

However, any limitations which were presented by lacking a clear theoretically-based methodological framework during research were subsequently resolved during the thesis research cycle reflection (Zuber-Skerritt and Perry 2002) and writing of this thesis. The author was able, after a few unsuccessful attempts, to fully conceptualise her generated data and engage in meta-analysis by utilising the insider action research approach derived from participatory action research. This methodological lens allowed her to see the lessons learned from this fieldwork as larger, overarching ideas which could be applied outside of the MOI or UAE context. By constructing her IAR cycles and

reorganising her data into new conceptual units, the author could reconnect to theory on PPP, NPM, and OL, and draw academically sound and empirically practical conclusions from her reflections.

One of the limitations was actually revealed during the process of reflecting on the overarching thesis research cycle: as an expatriate, the author often felt uncomfortable reflecting on the politics of insider action research within the UAE. Initial drafts of this thesis research lacked significant reflection, largely because open reflection by expatriates is not encouraged within the control-command organisation of the MOI. The author was, as an expatriate, afraid to express her reflections in a critical way; yet, as Coghlan and Brannick (2015) note, this very concern is part of the political challenge of conducting insider action research. As with all research with preunderstanding, there is a need to balance one's preexisting relationships, and even longer term career goals.

The final major limitation on the author's research was that she, like many of her colleagues in the Strategy Department, struggled to separate her roles in the ADP and MOI, making it difficult to gain clear insight into differences between public administration at the federal-level (MOI) and Emirate-level (ADP). In many cases, there were too many interdependencies between organisations to keep track of all the relationships. The author had hoped to do a comparison between the two PPP experiences, but found that she struggled to separate her observations of PPP cycles at each level. Most of her colleagues also conflate these two levels of responsibilities, sometimes even intentionally to

better provide support for interdependent policies. But this blurring of roles made it impossible to gain quality insight into the differences between governance levels. Unfortunately, this limitation - conflating federal-level and Emirate-level responsibilities and experiences - is so powerful that it impacts PPP deployment and NPM implementation, as discussed earlier. Solving this problem to conduct better research seems secondary to solving this problem to improve PPP advising and deployment.

### 9.3 Future Research Opportunities

This research transfers the practical experience gained through the experimental deployment of PPP to the accumulated contextual knowledge that may benefit government organisations in their steps of policy development and implementation. This research aspires to supply evidence on which the management of UAE government organisations can build upon their planning and resources forecasting in deploying PPP. It could also be translated into government guidance for deploying PPP, leading by example.

Future research could help to bridge some of the questions created by comparing PPP development at the federal- and Emirate-level PPP development. This could be done in a number of ways, including conducting survey work at the two levels for comparison, or working with a similarly situated researcher in a related but disconnected ministry. A more controlled set of PPP could be chosen to compare development at both levels simultaneously. Still,

the largest problems with comparing the federal and Emirate levels comes from the confusion that comes from participants holding dual roles.

As was discussed earlier in the findings, it was difficult for participants who were working simultaneously on separate-but-related committees, units, or teams at both the ADP and the MOI to fully separate and conceptualise their dual roles; this was also true at times for the author. Thus, one potential way to lessen the researcher's burden of too many positions (researcher and participant at the Emirate-level ADP in addition to researcher and participant at the federal-level MOI) would be to limit the researcher's role to her position at either the federal or Emirate level, and then work collaboratively with a second insider action researcher who was positioned at the other level. This would allow each to fully appreciate the nuances of the respective governmental level, and cleanly compartmentalise which challenges in PPP occur at the federal level and which occur at the Emirate level.

Another avenue for future research would be to add the final level of UAE public administration, and examine PPP planning and deployment at the municipal level. While this thesis research expanded on the work of Mansour (2017), who only focused on research at the federal-level in the UAE, the author was still only able to reflect from her advisory position at the ADP (Emirate-level) and MOI (federal-level). Future research could incorporate municipal-level reflection, to further explore the tensions which arise when stakeholders at various levels attempt to create PPP that is interdependent. Foundational work

on OL in municipal-level public sector organisations, such as Klimecki and Lassleben's (1998) work on how strategic OL operates in self-organising municipal networks, could provide insight into executing this future research suggestion.

This study investigated the PPP experience in an Emirate context, exploring issues of NPM and OL along the way. Through the use of insider action research and multiple core and thesis research cycles, the author was able to draw conclusions regarding the PPP cycle, the implementation of NPM principles, and the status of OL within the Emirate public administration. This study demonstrated that, through flexibility and continuous effort within an unevenly applied NPM framework, Emirate policy owners and the Strategy Department were able to develop successful policy plans and gain insight into ways to improve future PPP efforts. These findings, regarding PPP, NPM, and OL, can be applied outside of the UAE - most directly to other Gulfi administrative bodies, but also to other public administrations in the Global South.

This study also explored the use of Western models and methodologies to explain Global South experiences, and found many Western academic models in need of adaptation to fit comfortably with Emirate data. This finding is in no way unique to this thesis, but instead this thesis contributes to a body of literature that proposes variations on hegemonic models to explain policy development, OL, and modernisation in public administration. In addition, the

author demonstrated that insider action research allowed the reflective space for the author to gain valuable insight into how Emirate culture and hierarchy affected the success of PPP efforts. This allowed her to not only contribute to gaps in literature regarding PPP, NPM, and OL in the Global South, but to also add to the discourse about Emirate public administration, Emirate political structure and public governance, and the role of social and cultural dynamics in policy development in a command and control organisation all of which could be applied to other Global South administrations.

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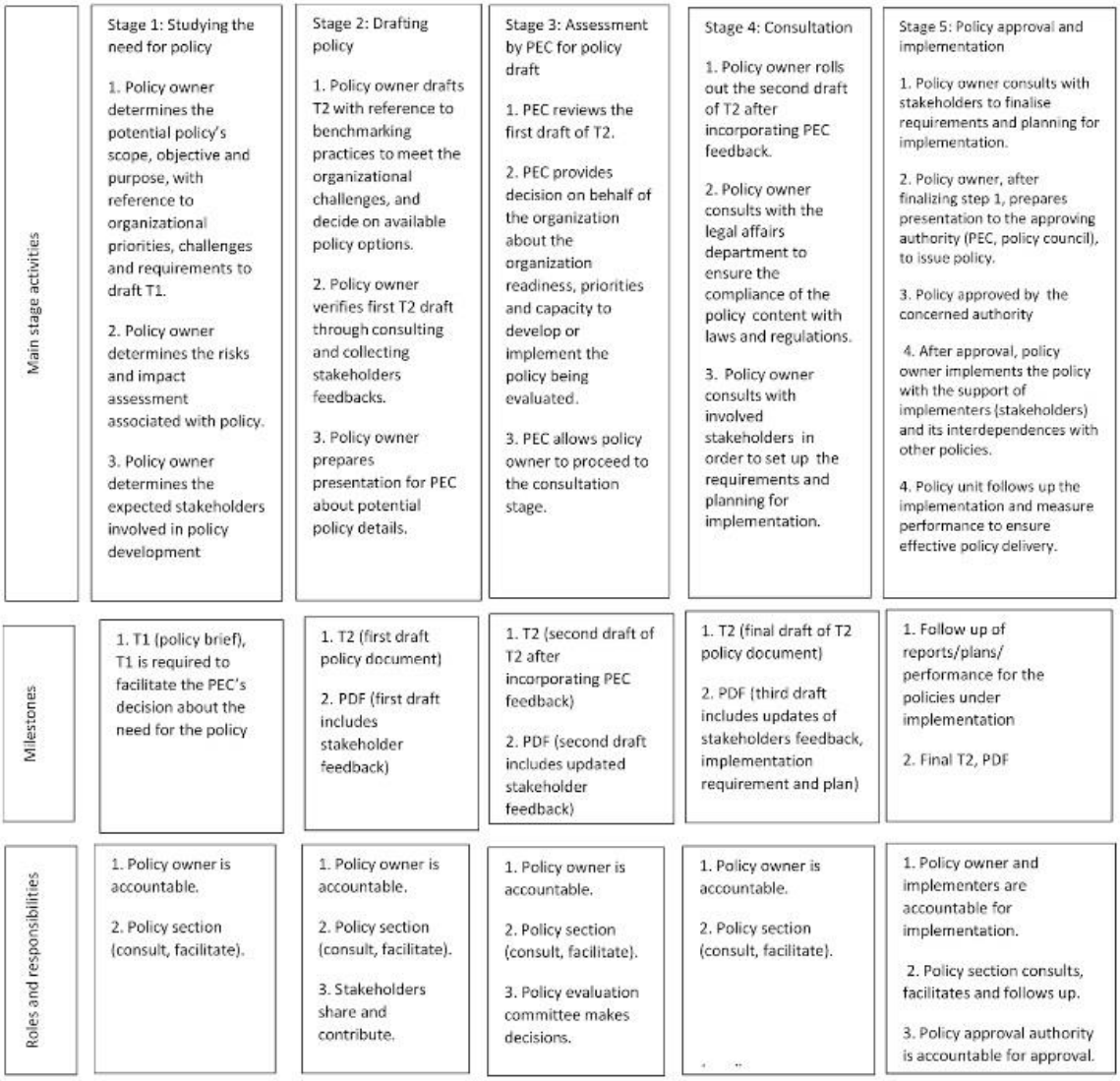
# Appendix



| | Stage 1: Studying the need for policy | Stage 2: Drafting policy | Stage 3: Assessment by PEC for policy draft | Stage 4: Consultation | Stage 5: Policy approval and implementation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main stage activities | 1. Policy owner determines the potential policy's scope, objective and purpose, with reference to organizational priorities, challenges and requirements to draft T1.<br>2. Policy owner determines the risks and impact assessment associated with policy.<br>3. Policy owner determines the expected stakeholders involved in policy development | 1. Policy owner drafts T2 with reference to benchmarking practices to meet the organizational challenges, and decide on available policy options.<br>2. Policy owner verifies first T2 draft through consulting and collecting stakeholders feedbacks.<br>3. Policy owner prepares presentation for PEC about potential policy details. | 1. PEC reviews the first draft of T2.<br>2. PEC provides decision on behalf of the organization about the organization readiness, priorities and capacity to develop or implement the policy being evaluated.<br>3. PEC allows policy owner to proceed to the consultation stage. | 1. Policy owner rolls out the second draft of T2 after incorporating PEC feedback.<br>2. Policy owner consults with the legal affairs department to ensure the compliance of the policy content with laws and regulations.<br>3. Policy owner consults with involved stakeholders in order to set up the requirements and planning for implementation. | 1. Policy owner consults with stakeholders to finalise requirements and planning for implementation.<br>2. Policy owner, after finalizing step 1, prepares presentation to the approving authority (PEC, policy council), to issue policy.<br>3. Policy approved by the concerned authority<br>4. After approval, policy owner implements the policy with the support of implementers (stakeholders) and its interdependences with other policies.<br>4. Policy unit follows up the implementation and measure performance to ensure effective policy delivery. |
| Milestones | 1. T1 (policy brief), T1 is required to facilitate the PEC's decision about the need for the policy | 1. T2 (first draft policy document)<br>2. PDF (first draft includes stakeholder feedback) | 1. T2 (second draft of T2 after incorporating PEC feedback)<br>2. PDF (second draft includes updated stakeholder feedback) | 1. T2 (final draft of T2 policy document)<br>2. PDF (third draft includes updates of stakeholders feedback, implementation requirement and plan) | 1. Follow up of reports/plans/ performance for the policies under implementation<br>2. Final T2, PDF |
| Roles and responsibilities | 1. Policy owner is accountable.<br>2. Policy section (consult, facilitate). | 1. Policy owner is accountable.<br>2. Policy section (consult, facilitate).<br>3. Stakeholders share and contribute. | 1. Policy owner is accountable.<br>2. Policy section (consult, facilitate).<br>3. Policy evaluation committee makes decisions. | 1. Policy owner is accountable.<br>2. Policy section (consult, facilitate). | 1. Policy owner and implementers are accountable for implementation.<br>2. Policy section consults, facilitates and follows up.<br>3. Policy approval authority is accountable for approval. |

**Appendix 1: The scope and objective of each stage in the UAE PPP Model**

| Appendix 2: The 22 Policies Relevant to Research, 2012-2015 UAE MOI | |
|---|---|
| Airport Security Policy<br>• Immigration and borders policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational | Anti-Corruption Policy<br>• Uni-functional management policy<br>• Applied across organisation |
| Criminal Investigation Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational | Crisis Management Policy<br>• Civil protection policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational<br>• Applied across organisation |
| Giving and Accepting Gifts Policy<br>• Uni-functional management policy<br>• Applied across organisation | Illegal Drug Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational |
| In and Out Airport Passengers Policy<br>• Immigration and borders policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational | In and Out Sea Passengers Policy<br>• Immigration and borders policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational |
| Incident Response Policy<br>• Policing and traffic policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational | Informants Management Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Uni-functional operational policy |
| Information Security Policy<br>• Civil protection policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational<br>• Applied across organisation | Missing Persons Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational |
| Productivity Policy<br>• Uni-functional management policy<br>• Applied across organisation | Protection of Oil Installations Policy<br>• Civil protection policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational |
| Protective Marking Policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational<br>• Applied across organisation | Risk Assessment Policy<br>• Uni-functional management policy<br>• Applied across organisation |
| Recording of Criminal Activity Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational | Rules of Pursuit Policy<br>• Policing and traffic policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational |
| Security Check - Policing Policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational<br>• Applied across organisation | Stop and Search Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational |
| Use of Force Policy<br>• Policing policy<br>• Cross-functional/ operational | Visitors' Visas Policy<br>• Immigration and borders policy<br>• Cross functional/ operational |

## Appendix 3: Example of observation and reflective memo documentation

**REF:** Ref. DF 08 Dated 04.06.2014
**SUBJECT:** Internal discussion about challenges at the consultation stage between
Liaison officers, consultant, policy advisers
**POLICY:** N/A

**FIELD NOTES:**

- The policy liaison officer claimed that most of the policy owners (committees) do not have enough resources to fulfil the public process development requirements. This results in delay or the transfer of uncompleted steps from stage to stage, rather than accomplishing them effectively at an earlier stage.
- I believed that these delays and transfers accumulate the deficiencies of performance, even if the process is flexible and permits some concessions from each stage to be questioned in the next. These behaviors also lessen the focus on the current stage, since time has to be used for closing steps from an earlier stage.
- The liaison officer said that the problem was needing to meet the mandate requirements when the momentum of policy owners cannot be withstood. In the current culture, when a group wants to advance it will blame others if it is held back.
- I responded that this will result in poor quality, however many of these projects need to be settled with a clear base first, and can be improved later, so pushing ideas forward is important. The liaison officer agreed to review issues again before implementation, when he has a better idea of the realities that will affect the policy; he felt there was no reason to try to fix issues before they are clear as this would just be extra load for policy owner to think and solve problems.
- The author advised putting a minimum filter or set of milestones between stages to ensure the minimum quality that could be accepted for a developing policy; for example, before a consultation session it is mandatory to have draft T2 and a presentation, keeping in mind that this draft does not necessarily include a perfect written statement (being flexible). As long as some effort is made to address these milestones, progress can be made. Furthermore, milestone deployment and assessment will be enhanced by the tendency for engagement between the policy liaison officer and the policy owners, and the need for proper case justification from the latter.
- The external consultant also complained that the consultation stage is very demanding and a PDF document is difficult to complete. The author reiterated that the consultation stage is flexible and includes 3 important parts: revision of the T2, consensus on implementation requirements and

the issue of an implementation plan. Each section should have reached stage T2 at least in part. For instance, T2 can be revised with stakeholders before presenting it to the evaluation committee. Then in a consultation workshop the policy owner can review T2 from the perspective of implementation and review the collection of implementation requirements from the T1 stage in order to draft an initial implementation plan at the consultation stage.

- However, the consultant insisted that the PDF document is too long to complete easily, even with his guidance. The consultant showed the author some of the PDF documents that policy owners had filled out and both agreed that a PDF document will be filled out as well as possible on the basis of whatever information is available; the PDF is a dynamic document and is updated as it proceeds. This because the most important items for the policy unit are to have at this time are a T2 as policy draft and a holistic understanding of the plan and the implementation requirements.
- I said I believed that a high-level statement, rather than details of development policy, would be the key to stakeholder engagement and consensus, since people prefer flexibility and less accountability. This flexibility gives stakeholders more responsibility later on when they are managing implementation in compliance with policy requirements.
- I also recommended to agree with policy stakeholder over who was highly affected by the policy and discuss with them the details of the policy and implementation challenges and requirements, bearing in mind their capabilities. This would ensure the quality of the policy content and less time needed during the consultation session to reach consensus. I recommended basing the consultation presentation on capabilities, challenges, and the assessment of the various policy stakeholders. I reminded those attending the meeting that the consultation stage was not the final stage in policy development, but merely one of several stages in which to assess the implementation requirements. These can be gathered at all the policy stages; the main goal is to deliver the policy.

**ACTION:** Suggest strategies for flexible transfers between PPP stages to reach the ultimate goals of obeying the mandate on policy development.

**LESSONS LEARNED:**

- In practice, expected stages change and many controls are lost, resulting in a flexible process for shifting activities from stage to stage; nevertheless, a clear milestone will be incorporated between stages to secure minimum quality.
- Implementation will always reveal development problems, requiring significant improvement to ensure policy delivery.

- What is planned does not always happen. At a later stage of policy development, you focus only on your goals of drafting the policy and holistically understanding the implementation requirement; you ignore details, until the draft is approved. Process flexibility is the key.
- High level statements and the flexibility in developing the policy reduce the difficulties of the consultation stage and allow greater space for stakeholders to implement policies according to their capabilities.
- I recommend conducting one-on-one consultation sessions, especially with stakeholders who will be highly affected by the policy; later workshops can be held for all parties to review and confirm the draft policy. This minimises time wasted and ensures a constructive consensus.
- The consultation documents are dynamic, being updated as policy development proceeds. Consultation presentations are based on the assessment of stakeholders' capacity to encourage the discussion of any implementation requirements.
- Consultation is not only the stage when implementation requirements are collected or verified. All policy stages should focus on generating a list of implementation requirements since the aim is deliver a policy.